

Using the Alchemical Magnum Opus as a Guideline for Creative Writing

by

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Abstract

The practice of creative writing is challenging the individual due to the lack of confidence in ability as well as a lack of systematic direction of how to approach the project. Like writing, alchemy concerns itself with crafting the perfect product, perfecting the practitioner's craft and also cultivating a confident and enlightened practitioner. Until now no creative writers have tried to implement the seven alchemical steps for the crafting of a creative writing piece to judge its effectiveness within the creative writing practice. The study explores whether the seven step alchemical Magnum Opus can serve as an effective writer's guideline to help cultivate a better and more confident playwright. The study will follow the practice-led Practice as Research model, wherein the practitioner will try and document the implementation of the Magnum Opus process to expand on the practice methodology of playwriting.

Chapter Two examines the basic history, theories and practices of exoteric and esoteric alchemy by looking at the fundamentals of the Emerald tablet, alchemical symbols, the seven principles of Hermeticism, as well as alchemy's influence on the works of psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung. Chapter Three explores the correlation between the practice and practitioners of alchemy and writing. In Chapter Four the seven steps of the Opus are implemented, starting with psychological preparation, the identification of creative blockages, the identification of possible themes, and the exploration of these themes. Finally the play will be drafted, examined and re-written.

In the final chapter it is concluded that the Magnus Opus can indicate a clear path to creation of the work and is flexible enough to make room for the playwright's own choice of creative writing exercises and planning, however it can be misinterpreted or underutilized, which could lead to problems in the narrative arch of the play. On a personal level the esoteric influences of alchemy help the playwright to become aware of possible mental hindrances to their writing and also as to what level of awareness and study is required to craft an effective writing ability.

Opsomming

Die praktyk van kreatiewe skryf kan 'n groot uitdaging bied te danke aan die gebrek aan vertroue in selfvermoë, asook 'n gebrek aan sistematiese rigting oor hoe die projek benader kan word. Soos skryf, is alchemie gefokus op die skepping van 'n effektiewe produk, die verbetering van die praktisyn se vaardighede, asook die kweek van 'n selfversekerde en verligte praktisyn. Tot nou toe was geen studie gedoen op die implimentasie van die sewe alchemistiese stappe vir die skepping van 'n kreatiewe skryfstuk of die kweek van 'n bekwame skrywer nie. Die studie ondersoek of die sewe stap alchemiese Magnum Opus as riglyn vir die kweek van 'n effektiewe kreatiewe skrywer, sowel as die skepping van 'n teaterteks. Die studie maak gebruik van die praktykgeleide Praktyk as Navorsing-model, waarin die praktisyn die implementasie van die Magnum Opus proses dokumenteer om bydrae te lewer tot die metodologie van toneelskryf.

Hoofstuk Twee sal die basiese geskiedenis, teorieë en praktyke van eksoteriese en esoteriese alchemie ondersoek deur te kyk na die beginsels van die Smaragtablet, alchemiese simbole, die sewe beginsels van Hermeticisme, asook die invloed van alchemie in die werke van psigiater Carl Gustav Jung. Hoofstuk Drie verken die verband tussen die praktyk en praktisyns van alchemie en kreatiewe skryfkuns. In Hoofstuk Vier word die sewe stappe van die Opus geïmplementeer d.m.v sielkundige kondisionering, die identifisering van kreatiewe blokkasies, die identifisering en verkenning van moontlike temas.

Ten slotte word die toneelstuk opgestel, ondersoek, en herskryf. In die laaste hoofstuk is die slotsom dat die Magnus Opus 'n duidelike pad na die skepping van die toneelstuk kan aandui en dat dit buigsaam genoeg is om plek te maak vir die toneelskrywer se eie keuse van kreatiewe skryfoefeninge en beplanning. Dit kan egter verkeerd verstaan of onderbenut word, wat moontlik kan lei tot probleme in die verhaalboog van die spel. Op 'n persoonlike vlak kan esoteriese invloede van alchemie die skrywer help om bewus te word van moontlike geestelike blokkasies wat hul skryfwerk hinder, 'n metode bied van hoe hierdie hindernisse verwyder kan word, sowel as klêm plaas op watter graad van bewustheid en navorsing die toneelskrywer benodig vir die kweking van gesonde skryfvermoë.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
Opsomming.....	3
Acknowledgements.....	4
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	8
CHAPTER 2: ALCHEMY, ITS HISTORY & PRINCIPLES	15
2.1 Introduction to Alchemy	15
2.2 Alchemy and Astrology: Pillars of Hermeticism	17
2.3 The (short) History of Hermeticism.....	17
2.4 The Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistus	19
2.5 Seven Principles of Hermeticism.....	22
2.5.1 THE PRINCIPLE OF MENTALISM:.....	22
2.5.2 THE PRINCIPLE OF CORRESPONDENCE.....	23
2.5.3 THE PRINCIPLE OF VIBRATION.....	25
2.5.4 THE PRINCIPLE OF POLARITY	25
2.5.5 THE PRINCIPLE OF RHYTHM	26
2.5.6 THE PRINCIPLE OF CAUSE AND EFFECT	26
2.5.7 THE PRINCIPLE OF GENDER	28
2.6 The Promise of Change.....	29
2.7 Exoteric Alchemy	30
2.7.1 Aristotle's Constitution of Matter.....	30
2.7.2 The Sulphur Mercury Theory	31
2.7.3 Alchemic and Hermetic Symbolism	31
2.7.4 The Tria Prima	33
2.8 Esoteric Alchemy	35
2.8.1 The Self as Prima Materia.....	35
2.8.2 The Practice of Spiritual Transformation.....	36
2.8.3 The Dangers within the Darkness	39
2.9 The Seven Steps:.....	43
2.9.1. Calcination	43
2.9.2. Dissolution	43
2.9.3. Separation	43
2.9.4. Conjunction.....	44
2.9.5. Fermentation	44

2.9.6.	Distillation.....	45
2.9.7.	Coagulation.....	45
CHAPTER 3: THE WRITER AND THE ALCHEMIST		46
3.1	Eso- and Exoteric Nature	46
3.2	Solitary work.....	47
3.3	Micro- and Macrocosm.....	48
3.4	Perception and Material	49
3.5	Strippers of Customs.....	50
3.6	Cryptic Expression.....	50
3.7	Seekers of Emotional Truth	51
3.8	The Power of Words	53
CHAPTER 4: THE MAGNUM OPUS		57
4.1	Calcination: Preparing the Self	57
4.1.1.	Identifying My Personal Myths	58
4.1.2	Becoming a Reader:	64
4.1.3	The Writer's Journal	66
4.1.4	Identifying Ideas	67
4.1.5	Researching Idea.....	71
4.2	Dissolution: Immersing the Self	76
4.3	Separation: Isolating and Sorting Ideas.....	81
4.4	Calcination, Dissolution, and Separation.....	88
4.4.1	Techno Foetus.....	88
4.4.2	Tech Neglect: The Machine Parent.....	89
4.4.3	Techno Selves: Social Media Identities	90
4.4.4	Corporate Asset: The Human Cog.....	91
4.4.5	Techno Isolation: Hiding In Plain Sight.....	91
4.5.	Conjunction: Preparing and Drafting.....	94
4.5.2	Synopsis	97
4.5.3	Drafting Techmata	100
4.6	Fermentation: Stepping Away	117
4.7	Distillation – Boiling the Solution	120
4.8	Coagulation – Writing the Final Piece.....	125
4.8.2	Play conclusion	137
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION.....		138

Bibliography	143
Addendum.....	146

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Alchemy as a speculative philosophic and protoscientific tradition could provide a systematic guide to playwriting by means of its seven step Magnum Opus. It is a commonly held belief for many contemporary writers, such as David Morley, a British writer and poet and Director of the Warwick Writing Programme and Professor of Writing, and Max Barry, an Australian author and blogger, that there exists no set method to writing and that the practice cannot lend itself to any system without either limiting its potential for experimentation or curbing itself of “wildness” (Morley, 2007: 21; Barry, 2010).

This however has not stopped many fictional writers, be it playwrights, novelists, short story writers or film writers from experimenting with various self-created systems. We need merely enter a book store, library or browse writing guides on the internet to realize the vast scope of titles claiming to teach the most effective writing method for one if not multiple genres. This range includes titles such as *Bird By Bird: Some Instructions on the Writing Life* by Anne Lamott, *The War of Art* by Steven Pressfield, *On Writing* by Stephen King, *Writing, Keywords in Creative Writing* by Wendy Bishop and David Starkey, *Writing A Play* by Steve Gooch, and many more (Bishop & Starkey, 2006; Gooch, 1988;

The question one can then ask is why the topic that is ‘writing methods’ is so popular and what is inhibiting everyday individuals, like myself, from putting pen to paper and crafting a Master Work when all these writing guides are so easily accessible. Though writing is unquestionably one of the most affordable and instantly accessible means of expression, it is also one which has drawn me to experiment only to leave me weary of returning to its practice. The reason for this is as follows:

Even after gathering enough courage to place myself in front of a blank page I found myself being bombarded by fears and unanswered questions: “Where does one start?”, “Is this play gripping enough?”, “Are their characters *real* enough for the stage?”, “Do I have the talent to be a playwright?” and “what will readers and directors make of my work, if I draws any readers at all?”. In short, the art of writing is a terrifying practice, but, like any other practice, it is characterised by trial and error. With this in mind I wanted to find a method which would facilitate and simplify the process of writing a play whilst providing a step-by-step guideline to simplify the trial-and-error process.

It is for this reason that I turned to Alchemy, an art which focuses on creating the perfect product, but which also focuses on perfecting technique for the sake of crafting the perfect matter. Alchemy’s focus can be placed on two main tasks. Firstly, crafting the philosopher’s stone, and secondly, the experiment of using the stone in order the turn base metals into gold, both exoterically and esoterically. That being said, the two practices, writing and alchemy, have crossed paths before and

still continue to do so. Many alchemical symbols and philosophies have appeared in famous old Western European texts, such as: The Christianised Grail romances, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Marlowe's *Faustus* and even Shakespeare's tales have been said to match the stages of the Alchemical Opus (Baigent & Leigh, 1997: 206; Elmes, 2014).

Coining the term 'literary alchemy', writer and blogger John Granger explains how authors like JK Rowling, Charles Williams and many medieval writers brilliantly made use of alchemical symbolism for the purpose of taking their readers on a "transformative psychological journey"; leading them from an impure state to a state of gold (Granger, 13 September, 2013). However, he was not the only one to have spoken of the journey and the search for literary gold.

In his book, *The Writer's Voice*, South-African-Namibian writer and poet Dorian Haarhoff dedicates a chapter to the "alchemy of writing". In it he quotes the poet John Eppel who also refers to the writer's pursuit of 'gold' in both his / her style and in the final product (Haarhoff, 1998: 133–134). Haarhoff himself briefly touches on the topic of using the systematic steps to fuel the writer's creation when he refers to the harnessing of the fire of the calcination phase (the first step in the Opus) to be channelled into the work (Haarhoff, 1998: 133–134). But while these authors believe and seemingly implement the philosophies of alchemy, their focus has primarily been the crafting of the metaphorical gold which is the completed text.

What the work of Haarhoff, Granger, and Eppel does not expand upon is the creation of the philosopher's stone which can be equated to the systematic writing method used to craft the metaphorical gold, in other words, the completed stage play in the context of this study. They also do not to give an indication of possible writing exercises and practices which can characteristically be linked to each of the seven steps of the Opus. Within this study I plan on contributing to their philosophy which links alchemy and writing by determining how the Magnum Opus could be applied as an effective preparatory and implementary writing guideline to indicate how the base material can be tempered to cultivate the philosopher's stone within the playwright. In order for me to undertake this artistic study it is necessary that I employ a methodology which will be able to facilitate both a subjective and objective viewpoint.

Practice as Research

As the title of the paper and the introduction suggest, my research deals with the cultivation of a possible creative writing system. This system will be evaluated on the end product which is the stage play I intend to write. This being the case, the only logical way to test this theory would be to experiment with it through a practice as research framework. There exist two main practiced models

under the PaR method (Candy, 2006: 2). The first is practiced-based, wherein the practitioner tries to gain new knowledge through practice as well as the outcome of the practice – which usually takes the form of designs, music, digital media and performance. The outcomes of this research model are of critical value in proving or disproving the researcher's hypothesis (Candy, 2006: 2). Second is practice-led research wherein the practitioner is mostly concerned with the nature of the practice being focused on. The individual's goal is to provide new knowledge about the practice through practice, which might lead to advancement in the field (Candy, 2006: 2).

Within this study I will be applying the practice-led model. Although the study will lead to the creation of a written play, the play itself is not the main focus. Rather, the focus falls on how much the process of researching and writing a play can be simplified. Whether the end result is effective or not is of less importance in comparison to the cultivation of a writer who is better prepared and more confident in their work after using the Magnum Opus as a guideline. I believe that once these traits are adopted with time a writer would find it less daunting to improve and create more interesting and original story-lines. Another critical reason for my choice in methodology has to do with my stance towards, as well as the communication, of the implemented system.

A problem with which playwrights are often met during their research is how to communicate the dimensions of the work they are engaged in. Because creative writers immerse themselves in a subjective realm it becomes difficult for the artist to remain objective during the process of creation and also in the conveying of the dimensions of the created story or play. To help keep myself objective and also to validate my findings on a broader scale I believe that the chosen methodology will help facilitate a critical mind-shift.

Artist as Researcher

Within this studio enquiry the Practice-led methodology allows me to step away from the stereotype of the artist as artist and into the shoes of a researcher. More importantly I believe it will help shift the focus on the creation from an end-product or artwork to the importance of the process and enquiry into the art of creative writing.

With this naturally being an experimental process, there are bound to be problems and opportunities which will arise, in other words, the discovery of new ideas and methods which could challenge or reinforce my pre-existing theory of the Opus as an effective writing system. What this study allows for is a documentation and analysis of these challenges and opportunities through *reflection-in-action* and *reflection-on-action*.

Reflection-in-action is done by the researcher documenting challenges and opportunities as they arise, through journaling or sketching (Mäkelä & Nimkulrat, 2011: 2–4). This allows for objective reflection on the practitioner’s subjectivity as well as on the project as a whole. At the end of the project the researcher implements *Reflection-on-action* wherein they reflect on the project in relation to the issues which were explored, as well as what goals were achieved through the study and how the reflection-in-action helped conclude certain findings (Mäkelä & Nimkulrat, 2011: 2–4).

To help cultivate a healthy objective stance towards the work, the methodology also places a strong focus on larger fields of theory wherein the researcher should locate his/her ideas. By researching previous and current theories and practices I hope to identify possible gaps in the field of writing and possible solutions to these problems.

Locating The Theory

It is thus crucial that I delve into the history of alchemy to determine how the philosophy came to be and what belief systems governed and influenced its methods. In doing so it becomes possible to compare both eso- and exoteric streams of the tradition, which in their own right branched out into numerous streams, which include psychological alchemy, herbal alchemy, acoustic alchemy, spiritual alchemy and so forth. For the purposes of studying the history I will be looking at *Alchemy* by Eric John Holmyard as well as *The Elixir and the Stone: The Tradition of Magic and Alchemy* by Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh. Holmyard, a researcher of history, science, and technology, played a significant role in rectifying some of the accounts of the history of alchemy, especially in how it stood in relation to Islamic science. Baigent and Richard have as well dedicate much research to the history of Hermeticism, witchcraft and the influence of these ancient arts on many contemporary spiritual and psychological beliefs.

Creative writing and alchemy both placing a strong focus on mental and physical preparation and growth in order to create the perfect substance, it is also necessary to study the work of an individual whose contributions to psychology and alchemy influenced and continue to influence many individuals in artistic, psychology and spiritual fields . This individual, one of the most influential writers on the esoteric stream of alchemy, was psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung, who discovered close parallels between alchemical symbolism and his own dream interpretation theories. Jung, fascinated by alchemy’s symbolic representation of the individuation process and its ability to speak to the

unconscious, believed that the tradition held great potential within the realm of psychology¹ (Zhu, 2013: 663).

The importance of Jung's work cannot be denied when one reasons that, as with any belief system, symbols are a key element in representing and describing not only the practices of alchemy but also the philosophies which govern them (Jung & Baynes, 1942: ix-xi). To understand the symbolism of alchemy is then to understand the Opus. The complexity of writing should also not be overlooked when compared to alchemy and it should be kept in mind that as practice writing is far older than the protoscience.

It becomes equally important that I direct my attention to creative writing methods as well. Studying creative writing guides such as those mentioned at the start of this chapter I hope to gain insight into various writing exercises, philosophies and preparation methods which can potentially be linked to alchemical symbolism and ultimately each of the seven steps. What I am particularly interested in are exercises which will aid in creativity as well as help rid the practitioner of insecurities towards their writing. Writer's block is a common subject amongst writers (young or old) and can arise due to many reasons; whether it be because of stress, ill preparation, readership pressure, or unrealistic personal expectations (Bishop & Starkey, 2006: 22).

I believe that if a system is to help guide the creative writer to a state of productivity and confidence, then this is a major point which will require focus in order to be overcome. Within this study I will be researching guidebooks by David Starkey, Wendy Bishop, Dorian Haarhoff, David Morley, and more. All of these writers speak with years of experiences in multiple genres and place a large amount of focus on the opening of creativity channels and the bypassing of writer's block. By studying their work I hope to gain more insight into my own journey and challenges, how I can overcome them, and also how these exercises could possibly fit into the Opus.

Observation and Journaling

The Practice-led model as well as the practice of playwriting place great importance on the act of reflection due to the fact that it helps the practitioner remain objective and identify possible flaws in their work (Mäkelä & Nimkulrat, 2011: 2–4). During my research I will be journaling the process and keeping track of the following: How I engage in each of the seven steps of the Opus, how each writing exercise is executed, the effectiveness of each exercise, the outcome of the exercise, the planning of the play, and any alterations made to the play.

¹ A psychiatrist focuses primarily on disorders such as a chemical imbalance and is able to prescribe medication, whereas a psychologist primary focus is on the patient's thoughts, feelings and general mental health and has no medical degree (EFPA, 2017).

The reason why I choose to employ the practice of journaling in this study is due to the fact that it will allow me the opportunity to stay aware of my subjective, and perhaps even prejudicial ties, to the work. This is needed in order to objectively evaluate the influence of subjectivity in the work, but also to assess the effectiveness of the Opus as well as the effect it has on my planning and writing. Although the study calls upon the examination of the Opus, the act of journaling will also help pinpoint errors on my part with regards to my implementation of it. As writer Gaylene Perry explains when talking about the writing of her novel *Water's Edge*, fiction always contains autobiographical traces (Barrett & Bolt, 2007: 35). As such I believe it is important to identify these elements and emotions and how it affects my role as researcher in this study as well as my role as novice playwright. Whether it is visual art, performance art, or literary art, I believe that each product in these fields carries with it traces of its creator and has the potential to reflect some aspect of the creative writer's identity and beliefs.

During this experiment I will be looking at various exercises to aid the writer in his / her discovery of self and the self's relation to the world. It should be noted that these exercises are merely a guideline and need not be followed as a strict set of directions; each creative writer is different after all and should feel free to add their own personal style to the methodology. The aim of these accounts is merely to inspire the reader to experiment.

Lastly, because alchemy as a practice is largely rooted in esoterica and makes effective use of metaphors to convey meaning, I will be identifying potential metaphors which could be used in my own play, or at the very least contribute to story and character ideas. This practice will also help me maintain the connection between the Opus and my work and also help keep me focused, by reminding me of what the Opus calls for during its implementation.

What I hope to accomplish at the end of the study is not only to illustrate how the Magnum Opus can serve as a writer's guideline, but that as a guideline it is flexible enough for the individual to shape it to their own needs and writing style.

A note on Style and Structure

In keeping with the spirit of alchemy and writing on research in the arts through Practice-led Research, this thesis does not conform to the traditional, thesis structure and style, but will fluidly move between formal academic, informal conversational, poetic, and descriptive styles. Inconsistencies in the expected amount of referencing and the style of language can occur where I can move between formal academic, informal conversational, poetic, and descriptive styles. The process

of writing a thesis is also a very personal, creative writing process and the style also echo's that creative process.

With regards to the style, the paper will first explore the basic history as well as the esoteric and exoteric theories surrounding the art of alchemy. With this accumulated knowledge I proceed to draw parallels between the alchemist and the writer so as to lend justification to my belief in the potential of the method in the playwright's field. Next, the seven step method will be applied, wherein I will start to create a text from scratch by implementing each of the seven steps of the Magnus Opus. Again I say that this is a process which will also be documented and experimented with using my journal. After the method has been applied I believe that I will be able to draw my conclusion within the final chapter as to how well the Magnus Opus lends itself to the writer's profession and whether or not it can be used as a beginners guideline.

CHAPTER 2: ALCHEMY, ITS HISTORY & PRINCIPLES

2.1 Introduction to Alchemy

The title of alchemist might conjure up various mental images of bearded old men surrounded by clouds of smoke whilst boiling toxic and curative elixirs. At least I'll admit that this is what constituted my initial idea of both the practitioner and the craft - as I am sure it still does many others. But to denounce it to the practice of mere potion brewing is to denounce an art which has been taken up by a variety of individuals from all walks of life throughout the societal spectrum. What then is alchemy and how did it manage to draw so much attention throughout our history?

Alchemy is said to be the art of transformation and throughout its history practitioners have always placed a strong emphasis on the observational study of nature in order to succeed in this art. This is due to the fact that nature itself harbours the secrets of change and perfection. By observing it the alchemist believes he can learn the manner in which nature sets about perfecting matter over long periods of time. He seeks then to compress a process which spans years, decades, millennia into a potent experiment which would not only surpass nature on the grounds of time, but also in its degree of perfection (Consciousness in Alchemy and Science, 2011). Alchemy is then an intervention and hastening of the natural processes of change all for the honouring of “quod natura relinquit imperfectum, ars perficit” – the belief that what nature left imperfect, the art perfects (Jung, 1967: 158).

The beliefs in the process of “transmutation” lead to the rise of two interdependent streams of alchemy which mirrored one another. According to E. J. Holmyard, it is possible to distinguish between two poles, namely exoteric and esoteric alchemy (Holmyard 1957: 13-14). The latter, which will be discussed first, is mostly known for its preoccupation with the crafting of the philosopher's stone, an object said to possess the power to turn base metals into gold and silver and to produce the elixir of life.

In order to begin their work in crafting the Stone, the alchemists require what is referred to in alchemical circles as the *Prima Materia*, or ‘First Matter’ as it is commonly known. Dennis William Hauck, a mathematician, writer, as well as practicing alchemist, explains that the *Prima Materia* is considered “the common heart of all materials, the dark, chaotic, unformed stuff of creation that is ‘hidden in plain sight’ throughout the universe” (Hauck, 2009: 1). It is then the primitive base of all matter.

Various sources of the First Matter have existed throughout history, however the black soil found within the Nile Delta in Egypt is considered by most to be the first. This is largely due to the fact that the Egyptian *kmt* or *chem* refers to ‘the black land’ - which is the name given by Egyptians to their own country. Some also suggest that the name is derived from the Arabic *alkimia* or *al-khemia*, meaning “The black dirt” (Forbes, 1953: 1 and Holmyard, 1957: 17). A third theory suggests that the name had its origins in the Greek *chyma* or ‘casting’ and that the Arabs, who were occupying Egypt during the 7th century, merely added the ‘al-’ (Holmyard, 1957: 17 and Hauck, 2005: 16). Theoretical clashes like this one are very common within studies of Alchemy, and we will soon discover exactly why this is the case.

If one is to examine the origin of the art it must be kept in mind, as R. J. Forbes states, that these Near East empires grew out of the ‘Urban Revolution’ (Forbes, 1953: 1-2). This period brought about the establishment of various practices such as “plough agriculture and irrigation, the wheel, the ship, metallurgy of gold, silver, copper, and bronze, textiles, and writing”, all which formed the basis of modern technology (Forbes, 1953: 1-2).

While the first materials were that of stone, wood, clay and metals, what truly brought about the greatest change in the technological development was humanity’s mastery of fire. It is this mastery that set the wheel of chemistry into motion as craftsmen were now able to smelt ores and shape them to fit individual and communal needs (Davis, 1936: 552).

While it might often be believed that alchemy gave rise to chemistry, history proves that humans had already accumulated a basic knowledge of chemistry beforehand. Smelting is after all a chemical process and if exoteric alchemy is the chemical art of transmutation, one would need to possess some basic knowledge of chemistry in order to practice it (Davis, 1936: 552). However, these practices weren’t built solely on scientific theories. Due to the esoteric influence the alchemists believed that they required divine help. This is not only true of alchemy but of most operations carried out by the craftsmen of the time, which were “accompanied by religious or magical practices” (Holmyard, 1957: 18).

The strong distinction that has been made between science and religion in contemporary Western thinking, was not present in ancient civilisations, many of which saw no differences at all. As a result strong connections were drawn between metals, plants, planets as well as gods worshipped at the time. It is here that I will briefly the focus from alchemy and onto the practice known as astrology, which had a great influence on certain beliefs in alchemy and the shaping of various symbols to be used in its establishing years.

2.2 Alchemy and Astrology: Pillars of Hermeticism

Astrology placed a strong focus on the macrocosm of the universe and the microcosm of the individual and how the two existed in parallel with one another (Forbes, 1953: 7). Thus all occurrences or ‘activities’ within the universe: 1) affected humans and 2) had an equivalent in the individual as the microcosm and vice versa (Holmyard, 1957: 18). Just as the universe housed life in the forms of humans, animals and various other animate creatures, so too do our bodies house various life forms such as bacteria and parasites, to name but a few.

It was commonly believed that our souls derived from stars and that their energies entered the person and gave them life. When a human being passed on, this energy would “return to heaven by the same path” (Forbes, 1953: 7 and Holmyard, 1957: 18). With time, perfect working conditions for certain metals would be established by the philosophers and craftsmen who read the twelve sign zodiac and it was not long before these metals were tied to various deities within the Greek religion. Holmyard confirms the latter practice in the following passage:

“Whereas Babylonian astrologers had given pride of place to the Moon, the Greeks gave precedence to the Sun. The Moon and the five planets then known were assigned each to a special deity and endowed with the characteristics of that deity . . . The old idea that planets were connected with metals was also adopted, so that the Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Venus, Jupiter, and Saturn were often metaphorically used to signify gold, silver, iron, mercury or quicksilver, copper, tin and lead”

(Holmyard, 1957: 19).

The establishment of a new belief system would follow shortly thereafter with the conquering and the founding of the Egyptian city Alexandria by Alexander the Great (Forbes, 1953:7). This belief system would become known as Hermeticism and would motivate a great deal of people to take up the art of alchemy - which was to become one of the three pillars of Hermeticism, along with astrology and theurgy².

2.3 The (short) History of Hermeticism

The great city of Alexandria set itself up to be a centre point for the ‘syncretism’ of various cultures, philosophies and religious belief systems. Though it might not often be realised, Baigent and Leigh point out that it was during this syncretism that the majority of what constitutes modern Western values and consciousness was shaped (Baigent & Leigh, 1997: 19). Out of these explosions of

² Theurgy is the practice of using magical rituals in order to evoke the gods and persuade them to take, or refrain from taking, specified actions (Merriam-Webster, 2017)

ideologies, one would emerge which would overwhelm them all with regards to its historical influence:

“Among the most important products of the Alexandrian syncretism was the amalgam that would subsequently coalesce into Western magical tradition – the tradition in which Faust, as we have known him since the Renaissance, was steeped. This tradition can most conveniently be called Hermeticism, or Hermetic thought”

(Baigent & Leigh, 1997: 19).

The key figure within Hermeticism is Thoth-Hermes, a syncretism of the Egyptian god Thoth (the god of writing and magic) and the Greek god Hermes (the god of transition and boundaries and messenger to the gods). Thoth, to the Egyptians, was a moon/lunar god and had a close relation to silver, which was considered a sacred metal at the time (Baigent & Leigh, 1997: 21 & Holmyard, 1957: 95). Like Hermes, Thoth also possessed the ability to bridge mortal and immortal realms and was tasked with the weighing of souls at the gates to the underworld just as Hermes was believed to transport souls from the realm of the living into the afterlife (Baigent & Leigh, 1997: 21 & Boylan, 1922: 139 - 140).

Both gods were believed to have invented writing which, along with the spoken words, were believed to house powerful magic. It then comes as no surprise that both these gods of literature were also regarded as the gods of magic (Baigent & Leigh, 1997: 21 & Boylan, 1922: 139 - 124).

In time Thoth-Hermes became known as Hermes Trismegistus - Trismegistus meaning “Thrice Great” and being a reference to the three branches of universal wisdom, namely: alchemy, astrology and theurgy according to Donald George Carty, a scientist, philosopher, spiritual explorer, socio-cultural anthropologist, speaker, author, and founder of the Personal Development Institute (Carty, 2007: 4).

Housing these three branches of wisdom meant that many of their core beliefs were established in Hermeticism as well. An example of this would be the micro- and macrocosm belief discussed earlier. On top of that Hermetics also believed that all matter was spiritually connected and in turn also connected to an originating energy or entity. According to the Kybalion (a book which is said to contain the essence of the teachings of Hermes Trismegistus) this was known by the Hermeticists as the Principle of Mentalism:

“The ALL is Mind. This Principle embodies the truth that ‘All is Mind.’ It explains that THE ALL (which is the Substantial Reality underlying all the outward manifestations and appearances which we know under the terms of ‘The Material Universe’; the ‘Phenomena of Life’; ‘Matter’; ‘Energy’; and, in short, all that is apparent to our material senses) is SPIRIT which in itself is UNKNOWABLE and UNDEFINABLE, but which may be considered and thought of as A UNIVERSAL, INFINITE, LIVING MIND. It also explains that all the phenomenal world or universe is simply a Mental Creation of THE ALL, subject to the Laws

of Created Things, and that the universe, as a whole, and in its parts or units, has its existence in the Mind of THE ALL, in which Mind we ‘live and move and have our being’

(The Three Initiates, 2012: 9).

Baigent and Leigh go on to explain that everything in creation, whether it is physical, mental or spiritual, has its place and purpose - even the concept of ‘evil’ (Baigent & Leigh, 1997: 24). This corresponds to the Taoist belief that all which exists is in balance and meets at a “single point” and that the individual must harmonize themselves with this universe. Put simply, he or she must return to the point (Kohn, 2006: 328, 336).

The focus on the three hermetic branches meant that, like Taoism³, Hermeticism was not just a belief system, but a practice which consisted of many disciplines such as meditation, breath control and memory training which were used for the reawakening of the individual’s divine consciousness (Hauck 2014: 7 & Baigent & Leigh, 1997: 27). As a guideline for these practices and the Great Work of transmutation I will be referring to an ancient text used by the alchemists throughout the ages, known as the Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trimegistus.

2.4 The Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistus⁴

During Alexander's time in Egypt, more specifically 331 BCE, he discovered upon a tomb which he believed to be that of Hermes Trismegistus. Whilst exploring the tomb he found grasped within the hands of the ancient corpse of Hermes a mysterious green rectangular tablet. He thereafter ordered that it be transcribed and translated so as to preserve its contents. This account, found within the documents of Albertus Magnus, a German Theologian, is only one of the many origin tales of the divine text in question - more famously known as *Tabula Smaragdina* or ‘The Emerald Tablet’ (Carty, 2007: 4).

Other accounts hold that Noah took the tablet with him unto the ark during the great flood; that its writer, Hermes, had given it to Miriam, the sister of Moses, for safe keeping; or that Sarah, the wife of Abraham discovered the tablet in a cave near Hebron after the flood, and so forth (Holmyard, 1957: 25, 46 & 97; Powell, 1976: 21; Redgrove, 1922: 40). The following passage is the original translated version of the text:

The Emerald Tablet of Hermes

In truth, without deceit, certain, and most veritable.

³ Taoism: A Chinese philosophy based on the writings of Lao-tzu (*fl.* 6th century BC), advocating humility and religious piety.

⁴ Possible metaphor: What if these elements were presented as characters?

That which is Below corresponds to that which is Above, and that which is Above corresponds to that which is Below, to accomplish the miracles of the One Thing.

And just as all things have come from this One thing, through the meditation of One Mind, so do all created things originate from this One Thing, through Transformation.

Its father is the Sun; its mother the moon.

The Wind carries it in its belly; its nurse is the Earth.

It is the origin of All, the consecration of the Universe.

Its inherent Strength is perfected, if it is turned into Earth.

Separate the Earth from Fire, the Subtle from the Gross, gently and with great Ingenuity.

It rises from Earth to heaven and descends again to Earth, thereby combining within Itself the powers of both the Above and the Below.

Thus will you obtain the Glory of the Whole Universe. All Obscurity will be clear to you.

This is the greatest Force of all powers, because it overcomes every Subtle thing and penetrates every Solid thing.

In this way was the Universe created. From this come many wondrous Applications, because this is the Pattern.

Therefore am I called Thrice Greatest Hermes, having all three parts of the wisdom of the Whole Universe. Herein have I completely explained the Operation of the Sun.

(Carty, 2007: 5)

The Tablet is considered the cornerstone of Hermetic philosophy and seems to be a summary of the seven basic principles which constitute Hermeticism as well as a guide to the Great Work - the divine experiment undertaken by the alchemist for creating the philosopher's stone. During the centuries the passages of the tablet have been adapted by numerous alchemists, such as Jabir ibn Hayyan, Georgio Beato, Isaac Newton, Sigismund Bacstrom, Madame Blavatsky, to name but a few (Carty, 2007: 14 – 40). Pictorial translations have also been made such as the illustration below.

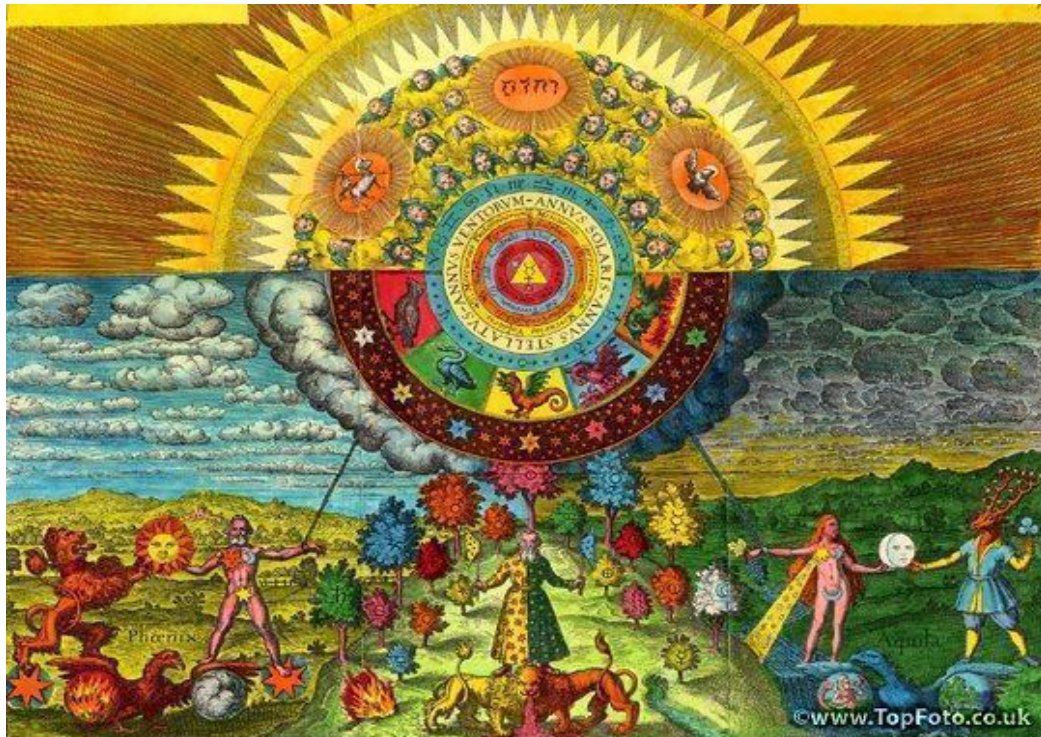


Fig 1: Tabula Smaragdina 1 (Charles Walker, 2013)

The illustration dates back to 1618 and was the work of one Matthieu Merian, an artist, who wished to illustrate in one engraving all the truths contained within The Emerald Tablet (Hauck, 2011: 76). However, to understand the tablet in both its verbal and visual forms it is necessary that one first grasp the seven depicted principles of Hermeticism.

2.5 Seven Principles of Hermeticism

2.5.1 THE PRINCIPLE OF MENTALISM:

“THE ALL is MIND; The Universe is Mental” (The Three Initiates, 2012: 9⁵).

This ‘all’ “is the Substantial Reality underlying all the outward manifestations and appearances which is understood under the terms of "The Material Universe"; the "Phenomena of Life"; "Matter"; "Energy"; and, in short, all that is apparent to our material senses is nothing but spirit (Carty, 2007: 64).

What they considered spirit, many individuals today call energy, a term the alchemists were not yet familiar with (Hauck, 2011: 83). According to Hauck, a mathematician, author, member of the International Alchemy Guild, and professional member of the ASSC (Association for the Scientific Study of Consciousness), the world, this great ball of energy, along with the entire universe is nothing more than a projection or mental creation of ‘The One’, ‘The Creator’, or God, if you will. It is this ‘One Mind’ from which the Prima Materia originated and “is controlled by the light of consciousness from the One Mind” (Hauck, 2011: 78).

Many of these ancient theories [and beliefs] have been further explored and given support by quantum physicists and mathematicians during the last century. One such mathematician was Kurt Gödel, who in 1931 published proof of the impossibility for any logical system to be both complete AND consistent. This is due to the belief that there will always exist statements which are true but which no formal theory would be able to prove (Hauck, 2011: 75).

To simplify his meta-mathematical calculations Hauck explains that the individual should look at the theory from the following perspective: If one were to draw a circle around any object in the world, even oneself, it would be impossible to explain every aspect about that object without referring to something outside of the circle: “There will always be something you have to assume but cannot prove” (Hauck, 2011: 75). If one were to draw a circle around the entire universe, the same principle would imply.

Gödel himself believed in the reality of the One Mind and influenced many others after him. One such individual was the theoretical physicist Werner Heisenberg, who also proved that no “precise

⁵ The Kybalion: Hermetic Philosophy, was originally published in 1908 by a person or persons under the pseudonym of "the Three Initiates", is a book claiming to be the essence of the teachings of Hermes Trismegistus. The person[s] preferred to remain anonymous, although many propose that The Kybalion was authored by William Walker Atkinson, Paul Foster Case and Elias Gewurz. Atkinson, all three of who were authors and experts on the occult (Wikipedia, 2017).

knowledge’ or “exact measurement” is possible when working on an atomic level: “He showed that the act of conscious observation and measurement of one magnitude of subatomic particle – whether it be its mass, its velocity, or its position – causes the other magnitudes to blur” (Hauck, 2011: 86).

This theory, that consciousness actually exerts force, has been verified more or less within recent years according to Dunne and Jahn:

“More direct evidence for the intrinsic inseparability of the mechanics of the physical world from the cognitive and emotional mechanics of the mind can be found in the currently compounding body of anomalous data on the interaction of human consciousness with low-level information-processing devices and systems. The class of research, barely a decade active, appears finally to be providing some systematic pattern of statistically replicable results within the long enigmatic and suspect domain of so-called psychic phenomena”

(Dunne & Jahn, 1985: 772).

Quantum physicists in our current day and age firmly believe that the results of an experiment are greatly determined by what the individual conducting it believes the outcome will be. According to authors and religious historians Baigent and Leigh the alchemist or physicist is then in no way separated from their experiment but stands in it and is part of it - a view shared in both fields of study (Baigent & Leigh, 1997: 301 & Hauck, 2011: 86) but also true in the process of writing or creating art.

2.5.2 THE PRINCIPLE OF CORRESPONDENCE

“As above, so below; as below, so above” (The Three Initiates, 2012: 10).

This principle sums up the relationship between the macrocosm of the universe and the microcosm which is the person. Alchemists believed that it is the key to solving many mysteries which they encounter in nature, for when facing the reality of an unknown plane, whether physical, mental or spiritual, by applying the principle of correspondence, one localises the nature of that realm and makes it familiar (Carty, 2007: 65).

This is possible according to alchemists because Hermeticism teaches that all realms, macro and micro, physical, mental and spiritual, run parallel with one another; they originate from the same single source. Due to this, the same laws, principles and characteristics apply to every unit originating from the Source (The Three initiates, 2012: 30).

Carty sums up the idea briefly by stating that “just as knowledge of the Principles of Geometry enables man to measure distant suns and their movements while seated in his observatory, so

knowledge of the Principle of Correspondence enables Man to reason intelligently from the Known to the Unknown. Studying the monad, he understands the archangel” (Carty, 2007: 65).

2.5.3 THE PRINCIPLE OF VIBRATION

“Nothing rests; everything moves; everything vibrates”

(The Three Initiates, 2012: 10).

Everything contained within the universe is in continuous motion and the nature of their manifestation is determined by the rates at which they vibrate. This is true for matter, energy, mind, as well as spirit. The vibration of spiritual energy for instance, is believed to be at a higher rate than that of gross matter and thus ranks higher on the scale (The Three Initiates, 2012: 10 & 36).

Modern science has proven much of this ancient principle and determined that particles at the subatomic level move in relation to each other and move by being tele-transported through time - “disappearing from one place to reappear in another place without moving along a continuous path” (Carty, 1997: 66 & Hauck, 2011: 83).

These manifesting vibrations are even said to occur in the form of thoughts and emotions, which correspond with the ‘force of consciousness theory’, and that individuals adjust their own frequencies when encountering people in order to establish a coinciding level of vibration during their communication with others (Carty, 1997: 66).

2.5.4 THE PRINCIPLE OF POLARITY

“Everything is dual; everything has poles” (The Three Initiates, 2012: 10).

While this principle might seem simple enough to understand, many mistake it to mean that everything in existence has two natures. This is not the case. While it is true that everything has poles or opposites, these opposites form part of the same nature (The Three Initiates, 2012: 10 & 39 & Carty, 2007:66). This can be said of light and darkness, for example, for while they vary in their degree, they are part of the same phenomena. Can we truly distinguish between the point where darkness ends and light begins? Where heat ends and cold begins? When the principle of good ends and turns to evil?

To sum it up The Kybalion states that: “everything has its pair of opposites; like and unlike are the same; opposites are identical in nature, but different in degree; extremes meet; all truths are but half-truths; all paradoxes may be reconciled” (Carty, 2007: 66 & The Three Initiates, 2012: 39).

2.5.5 THE PRINCIPLE OF RHYTHM

“Everything flows, out and in; everything has its tides; all things rise and fall; the pendulum-swing manifests in everything; the measure of the swing to the right is the measure of the swing to the left; rhythm compensates”

(The Three Initiates, 2012: 11).

All things have motion which exists between the two poles of polarity. It is a to and fro movement of both action and reaction and it dictates the very natures of so many systems: From the cycle of life to death to rebirth, to the rise and fall of nations, the movement of the planets, the push and pull of energy, and even emotions as people act and react to all that which surrounds them (Carty, 2007: 68).

Because this natural law has such a profound influence on the individual’s mentality according to the Hermeticists, they believe it to be crucial that the individual master it and use it to overcome its effects on him or her. I say ‘use’ because its effects supposedly cannot be stopped and as a law it is not something from which one can escape (The Three Initiates, 2012: 44). This use or manipulation of the natural laws to one's own benefit is what formed the base of the art of the Hermetists and mental alchemy. To manipulate the natural law they apply what is known as the Mental Law of Neutralization as Carty explains:

“The Master of Hermetics polarizes himself at the point at which he desires to rest, and then neutralizes the Rhythmic swing of the pendulum which would tend to carry him to the other pole. All individuals who have attained any degree of Self-Mastery do this to a certain degree, more or less unconsciously, but the Master does this consciously, and by the use of his Will, and attains a degree of Poise and Mental Firmness almost impossible of belief on the part of the masses that are swung backward and forward like a pendulum”

(Carty, 2007: 68).

2.5.6 THE PRINCIPLE OF CAUSE AND EFFECT

"Every Cause has its Effect; every Effect has its Cause; everything happens according to Law; Chance is but a name for Law not recognized; there are many planes of causation, but nothing escapes the Law”

(The Three Initiates, 2012: 45).

Nothing in this world happens by chance even though it might often seem like it. The Hermetists believed that every event within the universe could be traced back to a cause or the Law, which was also seen as The All or the One itself. If chance were to exist it would mean that it acted independently and refuted the natural laws of causality and thus The All.

Not only would it mean that this ‘something’ was uncontrollable to The All but, unlike everything else, it would actually exist outside of The All and thus be superior to The All, The Creator of everything. This is an inconceivable idea according to Hermetic beliefs. The Kybalion explains further that such an independent object “would render all Natural Laws ineffective, and would plunge the universe into chaotic disorder and lawlessness” (The Three Initiates, 2012: 45).

Even the act of coin tossing, though it might seem like an act of chance, still yields a result which can be traced back to multiple causes, from the strength exerted to make the toss, to the strength of a breeze, and so forth. However, in reaction to the rule of cause and effect Carl Jung developed the theory of ‘synchronicity’ which, though it does not refute the law of causality, cannot be explained by it. He believed that events weren’t just connected by means of causality but also by meaning (Carty, 2007: 69).

Jung had been working with a patient with whom he was unable to make progress due to her overly rational and intellectual mind-set. During one of their sessions she had been recalling a dream she had the previous evening in which she was handed a piece of jewellery in the form of a golden scarab. At this moment in her retelling Jung heard a loud thump against his office window and saw that a bug was trying to fly into the room. Jung proceeded to open window and caught the bug as it entered.

To his shock he discovered that the insect which he had just caught was in fact a golden scarab which was also a very rare occurrence in the present time of year. In ancient times the scarab symbolised the concept of rebirth and he took it as a sign that this occurrence was what was needed to break her rationalistic resistance to change, which it did.

Jung believed that these a-coincidental occurrences were as a result of an individual’s heightened psyche during a state of emotional intensity. During these states meaningful a-coincidences often take place and point individuals in a new direction or give them answers to questions they are presently battling with, yet without determinable cause (Aziz, 1990: 67 - 68).

Along with the questions on synchronicity, many have also been raised with regards to the relationship between free-will and that of causality. To these the Hermetic teachings state that free-will is only a partial truth and thus a pole of truth: “The Teachings are that a man may be both Free and yet bound by Necessity, depending upon the meaning of the terms, and the height of Truth from which the matter is examined” (The Three Initiates, 2012: 47).

According to The Kybalion the reality is that “the further the creation is from the Centre, the more it is bound; the nearer the Centre it reaches, the nearer Free is it” (The Three Initiates, 2012: 47). This need for freedom is what drives the Hermetists to master the principle; to overcome slavery in the form of customs, suggestions and all other causes outside themselves. They believed in obeying the law of causation in the higher plane and using it to assist in the ruling of their own plane, in other

words, using the knowledge provided by The All, to better the lower plane (Carty, 2007: 69 & The Three Initiates, 2012: 47).

2.5.7 THE PRINCIPLE OF GENDER

"Gender is in everything; everything has its Masculine and Feminine Principles; Gender manifests on all planes"

(The Three Initiates, 2012: 48).

This principle moves beyond the idea of gender as sex, in fact, sex is regarded as a mere manifestation of gender in the "plane of organic life" (The Three Initiates, 2012: 48). It corresponds to the principle of polarity in its statement that every being and every plane (physical, mental and spiritual) has dual elements, but takes it a step further in the same way the Taoists used the term Yin and Yang – Push and Pull (Kohn, 2006: 327).

The principle emphasises the way in which these polarities complement each other, and as Carty states, this at work in all things, even single sex organisms (Carty, 2007: 70). One pole is that of receptive nurturer, while the other is the expressive creator⁶. The goal is that of 'creating' and the principle emphasises the coming together of opposing forces and that in this combined work new things manifest themselves. Scientifically this has been proven in even the smallest particles such as the atom:

"The formation of the atom is really due to the clustering of negative corpuscles around a positive one – the positive corpuscles seeming to exert a certain influence upon the negative corpuscles, causing the latter to assume certain combinations and thus 'create' or 'generate' an atom. This is in line with the most ancient Hermetic Teachings, which have always identified the Masculine principle of Gender with the 'Positive', and the Feminine with the 'Negative' Poles of Electricity"

(The Three Initiates, 2012: 48).

The individual as being swings between these poles of gender, now adhering again to the principle of rhythm, while at the same keeping both of them present in him- or herself. In the same way the Hermetists believed rhythm should be controlled, they also believed that the ideal was to "seek harmony in living with their polarities" as well as "honouring the ebb and flow called for by the organic developments in self, society, solar system, and cosmos" (Carty, 2007: 70).

When looking back at the seven principles I don't only notice a strong attraction to the laws of the universe by the writers, but read within them a strong desire for mastery over them. What this creates is the potential for the individual to extend its grasp on the world but also itself.

⁶ Metaphor: What if one of the poles dominated within the main character or the chosen setting?

2.6 The Promise of Change

Hermeticism brought with it the promise of wisdom and the power of change in all things. According to Baigent and Leigh, whereas man had previously been nothing more than an observer of the world around him, following the tenets of Hermes he was granted the power to make active changes within the cosmos:

“He could monitor its workings and try to predict such phenomena as occurred around him. But he did not believe himself capable of bringing about any significant change beyond his immediate circumstances and environment... In order to produce such change, man had to beseech his gods to act on his behalf, and pray for them to aid him by their intervention, their intercession... Independent of them, however, he himself exercised no power that enabled him to shape reality to his will”

(Baigent & Leigh, 1997: 28).

The allure of cosmic power was quite profound during the establishing years of Hermeticism as individuals now had the means to shift from passive observer, to active participant. The fact that everything was interconnected and that planes ran parallel with one another meant that whatever change the individual exacted within their domain would have an effect on or within other plains.

Baigent and Leigh ideally use the mechanics of tapestry as a metaphor in order to explain these works. They state that “if one pulled a particular string or thread on the one end of the tapestry of reality, something else, in some other quarter of the tapestry, would ensue” (Baigent & Leigh, 1997: 28). However, these acts of change were not limited to things outside of the individual but were perceived as naturally corresponding to the laws in which all planes are connected such that these changes could occur within the individual as well.

The individual now possessed power to enlighten him- or herself, to EXPERIENCE The One from within and transcend into the realm where The One resides. Instead of merely being at Its mercy they could now assist The One by perfecting what had been left unperfected (How The Alchemists Achieved Their Transformations, 2014). Hermeticism became then the striving for knowledge, but not merely a plucking of the apple, but the tracing of the line from the stem to the branch, from branch to trunk, past the roots and into the darkest depths from which the life emerged.

It is then clear, as mentioned earlier, that the alchemy which flowed out of the Hermetic teachings had the dual nature of exoteric and esoteric, but that the practice of one required the practice of the other.

2.7 Exoteric Alchemy

2.7.1 Aristotle's Constitution of Matter

The theories which will be discussed proved invaluable to the development of exoteric alchemy and delved into the nature of metals and the characteristics which both separated and connected them. Aristotle believed that the base of our material world was primitive matter (the *Prima Materia*) which “had, however, only a potential existence until impressed by ‘form’” (Holmyard, 1957:19).

The four elements (earth, air, fire and water) were considered by him to be the most basic manifestations of the form and could be divided up by the qualities they possessed. Four prime qualities were named: moist, dry, hot and cold, of which each element possessed two, in other words, the combination of these two qualities formed an element (Holmyard, 1957: 20).

Of the combinations Aristotle listed in his treatise, *On Generation and Corruption*, four were possible: Hot and dry made up *fire*; hot and moist made up *air*; cold and moist made up *water*; cold and dry made up *earth* (Holmyard, 1957: 20). However, one quality dominated naturally over the other in each element. It was also believed that these elements weren't fixed in their state and Holmyard explains that they could “pass into one another through the medium or quality which they possessed in common; thus fire can become air through the medium of heat, air could become water through the medium of fluidity [moist]; and so on” (Holmyard, 1957: 20 & Redgrove, 1922: 19). Figure 2 gives a visual representation of the four elements as well the shared qualities.

Two elements combined together were also said to constitute a third. This meant that in the process, one quality would be removed from each, also taking care that the remaining qualities were not of an identical or opposite nature (Holmyard, 1957: 20).

If one were to remove the hot and moist qualities from fire and water, the element earth would be formed during their

combination for example. Aristotle stressed that during these changes it was only the form which underwent alterations, but that the prime matter which constituted the elements did not change in the slightest (Holmyard, 1957: 20).

All life and matter was thus said to have been created by the blending of the elements, each in particular proportions. This meant any substance could be changed into another merely by altering its

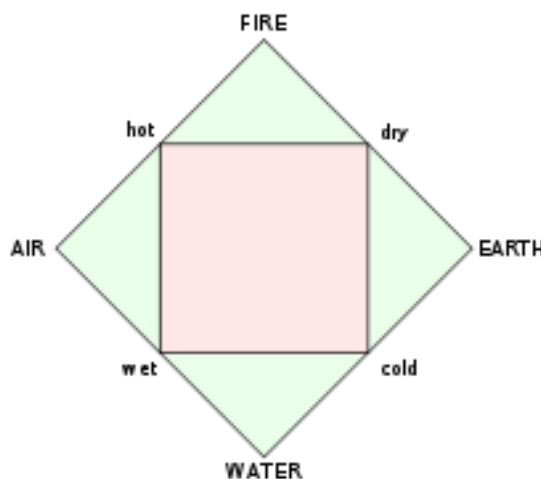


Fig 2: Aristotelian elements and qualities (Wikipedia, 2017)

proportions to coincide with the other. This provided limitless possibilities for transmutations and experiments which would in turn lead to new theories within the craft.

2.7.2 The Sulphur Mercury Theory

This theory built on the work of Aristotle and was developed by Jabir ibn Hayyan, an individual who possessed profound alchemical knowledge and raised alchemy in the Islamic tradition to new heights. Apart from his dealings in alchemy, Jabir also held several other occupations such as chemist, astronomer, astrologer, engineer, geographer, philosopher, physicist, pharmacist and physician (Haeffner, 1991: 121).

Jabir believed and formulated a different theory to how elements come into existence. According to his theory there exists the four ‘elementary qualities’ at first which are hotness, coldness, dryness and moistness. It is only after these qualities combine with ‘substance’ that the compounds of the first degree are formed, which we know as hot, cold, moist and dry (Holmyard, 1957: 72).

The combination of two of these qualities form an element in the same way Aristotle had believed. Jabir again took his theory further by explaining that metals possessed two of the qualities externally and the other two internally. For example, lead he stated was cold and dry externally, but hot and moist internally (Holmyard, 1957: 72).

It is here where sulphur, mercury and astrology come into play. According to the ancient Sulphur & Mercury Theory, metals are formed during the process wherein sulphur and mercury unite under unique planetary conditions. Sulphur was said to contribute the hot and dry characteristics of the metal, and embodied combustibility. Mercury in turn, the moist and cold, and also embodied the spirit of metals as well as liquidity. The purity of the sulphur and the mercury determined what metals were formed and it was believed that the purest samples, when united, were able to craft the philosopher’s stone. This stone being so pure a substance would be able to turn base metals into gold (Powell, 1976: 33).

This union, which would later be known as the ‘sacred union’, became one of the key principles of alchemy, but would also take on various metaphorical forms which coincided with planets, human traits, kings and queens and would confuse many modern researchers who took up the study of the ancients (How The Alchemists Achieved Their Transformations, 2014)

2.7.3 Alchemic and Hermetic Symbolism

As stated previously, Alchemy shared many beliefs with astrology, an art which connected most of the world's events and matter to the seven planets which governed or guided them. These connected objects ranged from metals, animals, plants, colours, human emotions, etc (Powell, 1976: 30). It then comes as no surprise that alchemy also made use of these links in reference to specific procedures, materials or ingredients as:

“For example, some of the correspondences of Venus were copper, the colour green, the dove and the sparrow, and the power of love. Alchemists made great use of this system of correspondences. Knowledge of the mysterious links between different things under the protection of the same planet was considered invaluable in many experiments. It also provided a ready-made symbolism or code in which one name could be substituted for another. Alchemists delighted in shrouding their writings with mystery and obscurity because they were always afraid the information would fall into the hands of the wrong people. Perhaps they also enjoyed the secrecy for its own sake”

(Powell, 1976: 33).

The ‘wrong people’ mentioned briefly by Powell included, for one, the church, which viewed alchemy and Hermeticism as pagan arts and considered them threats to its rule. Another threat was that of the fellow ‘alchemists’ or more specifically, ‘puffers’. These ‘puffers’ were considered frauds who merely practiced it for the obtainment of riches and possessed no interest in its spiritual value or philosophies (Read, 1951: 9).

According to Albertus Frater, the founder of the Paracelsus College, writing in such a cryptic manner the true alchemists hoped firstly to dispel the suspicions of the holy men as well as to mislead the ‘puffers’ in their work:

“Their allegorical phraseology is employed merely as a method of concealment. ‘Red lion’, ‘green dragon’, ‘dragon's blood’-these are not terms to be taken literally, any more than the Philosopher's Mercury, Sulphur and Salt are the common substances we know by those names. Experimentation based on such literal readings of the alchemists' works is bound to end in failure”

(Frater, 1960: 113).

In order to cultivate a better understanding of the vagueness of these writings I include a passage detailing an old alchemical experiment which was included amidst Holmyard's research:

*“The third daye again to life he shall uprise,
And devour byrds and beastes of the wilderness,
Crowes, popingayes, pyes, pecocks, and mevies;
The phenix, the eagle white, the gryffon of fearfulnessse,
The greene lyon and the red dragon he shall distresse;
The whyte dragon also, the antelope, unicorne, panthere,
With other byrds, and beastes, both more and lesse,
The basiliske also, which almost each one doth feare”*

(Holmyard, 1953: 157).

The scope of symbolism in alchemy is immensely wide; to such an extent that the coverage of all of it, from animal, planetary, elemental and religious, would take up the majority of the thesis if attempted. Thus I will only be focusing on those which serve the needs of my experiment - all which are found within the Magnum Opus and a few others which could help explain each of the seven steps in the creation of the Stone.

2.7.4 The Tria Prima

The best place to start would be at the *tria prima*. The ‘three primes’ were made up of sulphur, mercury and salt and was said to be the substances from which all life is created (Frater, 1960: 30 & Karpenko, 1973: 270). Each one of these substances was believed to be made up of all three; however one dominated in each, in other words, while salt would be made up of mercury, sulphur and salt, salt dominated the majority of the material (Carty, 2007: 90). Three substances should however not be mistaken for ordinary sulphur, mercury and salt, but were products of distillation and of the highest quality (Frater, 1960: 30).

Sulphur⁷ (represented by figure 3) is often known as the Sun, Sol, The King, The Wingless Lion, male, the active principle and fire. In exoteric alchemy, it is praised as the inflammable substance and provided the combustibility needed to transmute the metals (make them grow) as well as colour them (Silberer, 2009: 92 & Redgrove, 1922: 20). In esoteric alchemy it symbolizes the soul of the person as the inward individual spirit, their signature essence or quintessence (Redgrove, 1922: 15 & Hauck 2014, 15). It was also known as the rational and intellectual consciousness in the person which drives their intent (Hauck, 2014: 16).



Fig. 3: Sulphur Symbol
(Wikimedia, 2014)



Fig. 4: Mercury Symbol
(Wikimedia, 2014)

Mercury⁸ (represented by figure 4) is known as the Moon, Luna, The Queen, The Green Lion, the female, the divine water and the passive principle, among many other things (Powell, 1976: 67) & (Silberer, 2009: 119). The symbolism of Mercury is probably the most confusing of all due to the fact that it is represented in so many physical and theological forms – one of which includes the figure of Hermes Trismegistus, also known as Mercury, Mercurius, Toth, Thoth-Hermes and Azoth.

⁷ Metaphor: Again, the poles. Possibly the active and aggressive side of a character.

⁸ Metaphor: Possibly the emotional and sympathetic side. What if none were grounded by salt? Would their clash be too great?

The name is also used to describe his essence within us as Silberer explains: “Sometimes they speak of the whole man as mercury... and then by the same word perhaps they speak of something special, as our mercury which has besides, a multitude of other names” (Silberer, 2009: 119).

Mercurius is said to contain all four elements and possesses the duality of all things, such as, fire and water, male and female, hard and soft, active and passive, life and death, matter and spirit, and so forth (Jung, 1967: 218 & 235). To simplify things I will merely refer to the role of mercury in the physical and spiritual Opus. Physically, mercury was believed to contain the metallic essence of all the metals as well as fusibility, for it consumed sulphur in the process of transmutation and gave lustre to all metals (Redgrove, 1922: 20).

Spiritually Mercury represents the spirit as bridge between the higher and lower planes. As the divine water it was said to represent the process of death and rebirth (Jung, 1967: 102). In contrast to sulphur, mercury is the emotional consciousness in the person, their feelings in the present moment (*Solve et Coagula*, 2015).



Fig. 5: Salt Symbol
(Wikimedia, 2014)

Lastly there is **salt** (represented by symbol 5). Physically salt provided the characteristics of fixity, solidification and non-flammability to all metals (Redgrove, 1922: 22). Symbolically, salt is the body/matter, our outward manifestation on earth. It

is also the element which ties us to matter (Redgrove, 1922: 22).⁹ Below is the visual representation of the concept of the tria prima.



Fig 6: Tria Prima (Moran, 2004)

⁹ Metaphor

2.8 Esoteric Alchemy

2.8.1 The Self as Prima Materia

While it is true that exoteric alchemy placed its focus on physical transmutation, it was believed that the success of the alchemist's work rested on some help from the divine. It is in this belief that we find the origins of esoteric alchemy which view the physical process and its materials as a metaphor for transformation of the human soul and its synchronisation¹⁰ with the One Mind – the All Creator (Holmyard, 1957: 14).

What must be kept in mind when studying esoteric alchemy is the contrast between modern and historical science. For alchemists, the spiritual and the material were intertwined meaning that the two streams of knowledge were mostly united and interdependent during alchemy's flourishing years (Redgrove, 1922: 8). According to Hauck, many of these alchemical insights are now being confirmed in contemporary disciplines, such as psychology and quantum physics, which is exploring the 'force of consciousness' theory (Hauck, 2016: 47).

The alchemist considers the lab work to be a vehicle for the purification of the soul; in many ways each of the materials and systematic steps signify for the alchemist their own being (Silberer, 2009: 118). Ethan Allen Hitchcock, an US Army Officer and great contributor to alchemical research elaborates on this view within the following statement:

“The work of the alchemists was one of contemplation and not a work of the hands. Their alembic, furnace, cucurbit, retort, philosophical egg, etc., etc., in which the work of fermentation, distillation, extraction of essences and spirits and the preparation of salts is said to have taken place was Man,—yourself, friendly reader,—and if you will take yourself into your own study and be candid and honest, acknowledging no other guide or authority but Truth, you may easily discover something of hermetic philosophy; and if at the beginning there should be ‘fear and trembling’ the end may be a more than compensating peace”

(as cited in Silberer, 2009: 118).

However, just because the alchemist does not seek to delve primarily into the exoteric, unlike the modern chemist or scientist, does not mean that the individual traps themselves in a passive ideological state either. Instead the alchemist seeks the 'truth', which Holmyard speaks of, in the divine and the practitioner's connection with The All in knowledge (Holmyard, 1957: 160).

This active strive for knowledge as a means of 'worship' and working in behalf of the 'The All', as previously stated, was what made and still makes the practice of alchemy and Hermeticism so alluring; for it is not just a simple belief system but rather it is *the* practice. This belief in connecting

¹⁰ Metaphor: Characters as aspects of an experiment or equation?

with the divine in one's own home naturally meant that it was often opposed by the church, which tried to retain control over the people.

2.8.2 The Practice of Spiritual Transformation

How would one then go about the purification of the spirit? Truth lies in knowledge and due to this the task of change has to be undertaken mentally. This sets the process of spiritual change into motion. However, this requires the alchemist to direct the totality of his / her consciousness unto itself at first. The *Rosarium Philosophorum*, an alchemical treatise published in the 16th century, stated that the individual needed to direct their attention towards the ‘salt’ within their mind:

“Who therefore knows the salt and its solution knows the hidden secret of the wise men of old. Therefore turn your mind upon the salt, for in it alone [i.e., the mind] is the science concealed and the most excellent and most hidden secret of all the ancient philosophers”

(Jung, 1953: 244).

Though the passage refers to the mind of the practitioner as the focus point, it draws our attention to something found much deeper within, namely, the *sal sapientiae* or ‘salt of wisdom’. This is something which exists far beyond the mere perceptive qualities of consciousness (Jung, 1953: 244). However, the attainment of this wisdom is not believed to come without sacrifice.

It requires the surrendering of ego. Whereas ego hardens the mind and keeps it closed off to understanding, the process requires a ‘subtle mind’, one devoid of arrogance and greed. According to Jung the individual must open his / her mind to the wisdom of the unknown and be patient in their work. He / she must be willing to sacrifice themselves while maintaining their good nature. This also requires the individual to be firm in the task of bringing about change - note, not arrogant, but firm in the belief, in the divine goal, in the wisdom of the unknown, as well as in each of the required steps within the journey (Jung, 1953: 259).

Earlier I briefly touched on the aspect of the ‘unknown’ within the Hermetic Principle of Correspondence (see section 2.5.2). This principle places it within various physical, spiritual and mental planes. If the individual is to understand this ‘unknown’, it requires them to use the Principle of Correspondence to explore the unknown of the macrocosm and to localise it within their own mind. The equivalent of nature's unknown within the mind of the individual would be their ‘unconscious’. This is not to be confused with the ‘subconscious’ as the latter is merely a part of the mind which stores presently unused or even repressed information (Jung, 1953: 246).

Though the term was expanded largely by Freud, Jung distinguished between two types of ‘unconscious’. The first is the personal unconscious which is based on Freud's definition of what some would call the ‘subconscious’ today. The second is the ‘collective unconscious’ and is the part of the mind which Jung believes has inherited unexplainable symbols and motives which people have not personally been the acquirers of. According to Jung, it is a state of mind shared by all humans and has been passed on from generation to generation as he explains briefly in the following extract:

“Just as the human body shows common anatomy over and above all racial differences, so, too, the human psyche possesses a common substratum transcending all differences in culture and consciousness. This unconscious psyche, common to all mankind, does not consist merely of contents capable of becoming conscious, but of latent predispositions towards identical reactions. This explains the analogy, sometimes even identity, between the various myth motifs and symbols, and the possibility of human communication in general”

(Jung, 1967:11-12).

Jung proposed that this shared unconscious could be very influential as people unconsciously project these symbols into their reality, accepting it as their own. Projection takes place whenever the person comes into contact with the unknown. Though many of his fellow psychologists viewed the theory as irrational and too closely linked to spiritual philosophies, Jung was content and steadfast in his belief of the spiritual connection shared by mankind. However, to make the concept clearer, let us examine it by creating a scenario amongst two individuals who are completely unacquainted with one another:

Our main character is Jason, a middle-aged man on his Sunday afternoon grocery run before the start of a new and gruelling week. Passing through an aisle Jason crosses paths with Andrea, also middle-aged, and also stocking up on all the necessities. As they pass by one-another they exchange a brief glance. Jason, who knows nothing about Andrea, perceives her glance to be judgemental and hostile. As a result of this perception he is immediately put off by her presence.

If one were to judge the scenario by alchemical and Jungian standards then one could argue that this is a case of projection on Jason's part. Being faced with the unknown (his lack of knowledge about Andrea as well as her glance) his unconscious mind fills in the blank space with symbols or data. He is completely unaware of this projection. In response to this, his conscious mind interprets these projections, in the form of qualities and meanings, existing outside himself and inherent to the object or person whom he is viewing – in this case, Andrea.

The reality is that Jason's unconscious or ‘psychic background’ is actually being mirrored in Andrea, in the unknown, in the darkness, and what he perceives to be hostile behaviour is actually a reflection of his own hostility towards her and himself, for whatever reason.

If taking Jung's theories into account then this would be an example of how the individual constructs their entire world through the illusions projected by their unconscious; illusions which potentially end up corrupting them with false ideologies and which go about influencing their consciousness (Jung, 1967: 35). This collective unconsciousness or shared unconsciousness individuals possess with the rest of humanity exists on the one end of what Hauck refers to as the horizontal or material plane. This unconscious half is also the feminine energy and emotional state of reality, whereas the other is comprised of masculine energy, reason, or consciousness.

When looking at the Smaragdina Tabula (fig.1), one can clearly distinguish between the horizontal planes of our reality which is found underneath the golden heaven, the heaven which is also regarded as the vertical plane. In the illustration the horizontal plane is divided into two parts: masculine and feminine, Sol and Luna. When these two halves are united in 'sacred marriage' the hermaphrodite is formed. The significance of this figure is explained by Hauck in the following passage:

"In the centre of the Below, a hermaphroditic alchemist holds up two starry hatchets, which represent the higher faculty of discernment and the powers of Separation. The alchemist has cut the chains of unknowing that tied Sol and Luna to their duality and balanced the powerful forces of their sexual attraction. He has seen through the Clouds of Unknowing, gained his freedom from instinct, and realizes the powerful influences of the archetypal powers. The empowered alchemist is symbolic of a successful Conjunction of the opposing forces to his left and right. Half of his frock is black with white stars and the other half is white with black stars. In other words, each side of his personality contains the seed of its opposite, so he has neither denied nor destroyed the compelling powers of the opposites, only integrated them into his own being"

(Hauck, 1999: 1).

When using the consciousness to breach into the darkness of the unconsciousness the practitioner is initiating the first steps at merging **sulphur** and **mercury**, **masculine** and **feminine**, **Sol** and **Luna**, **Yin** and **Yang**. However, because the consciousness finds its origins within the unconscious, they must not try and "identify the psyche with consciousness" (Jung, 1967: 42). The practitioner must admit the existence of this autonomous system, this second 'master' within their house according to Eckhart Tolle, author and spiritual teacher, if he / she hopes to understand and assimilate its influence to their consciousness (Tolle, 1997: 42 & Jung, 1967: 36).

Tolle himself referred to the work of the alchemist and how the practitioner should consciously focus within himself within his book *The Power of Now*:

“Sustained conscious attention severs the link between the pain-body and your thought processes and brings about the process of transmutation. It is as if the pain becomes fuel for the flame of your consciousness, which then burns more brightly as a result. This is the esoteric meaning of the ancient art of alchemy the transmutation of base metal into gold, of suffering into consciousness. The split within is healed, and you become whole again.”

(Tolle, 1997: 29)

No purification process, whether chemical or spiritual, is without its dangers and discomfort and many who have practiced alchemy, both then and now, have warned against the potential dangers when delving into the darkness of chaos.

2.8.3 The Dangers within the Darkness

One of these warnings are to be found in the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, which states that while engaged in the process of meditation and self-exploration, individuals must not be blind to the nature of the unconscious figures which appear out of the depths; that “the dead are instructed not to take these shapes for truth, not to confuse their murky appearance with the pure white light of *Dharma-kaya* (the divine body of truth)” (Jung, 1967: 35).

What it warns of is that these demons, monsters and illusions, which house themselves in the darkness, as terrifying as they may be, also possess an alluring nature, which so easily draws human curiosity and may cause individuals to act hastily in their exploration. When the individual becomes careless it is then that they give opportunity to the unconscious to overpower the consciousness and finally to corrupt it until the person is unable to distinguish between what is reality and what is merely illusion.

While these dangers might mostly be found within the mind, physical traumas have also been known to occur. One such case, is described by clinical psychologist, Jungian analyst, and author of *The Black Sun: The Alchemy and Art of Darkness*, Dr. Stanton Marlan, who had been working with a complex patient for some time. During their exploration of her unconscious she had reported that the darkness within her had manifested itself in the form of a black sun numerous times.

During therapy, they had analysed many of her dreams and sketched out the figures in the sun she had been encountering in order to interpret the symbols which the unconsciousness presented (Marlan, 2005: 34). While analysing the images of one such dream, a dream wherein she felt the inevitability of

a nuclear war, she suffered an aneurism which nearly cost her her life. As a result she lost the sight in one eye (Marlan, 2005: 34).

Cases of bodily aches, loss of sight and hearing, even the manifestation of cancer within the body have not been uncommon during times when the unconscious mind has driven the consciousness to its critical limit. In alchemical terms it corresponds to the dilemma wherein base metal (our ego), which is undergoing purification, is being exposed to a heat too great for it to manage¹¹.

The suffering becomes too much, resulting in a situation where “the ego’s skin is burnt, blackened, or tortured with stinging criticism, producing shame and threatening bodily integrity” (Marlan, 2005: 40). Alchemist Sir George Ripley equates the fire to a “dragon violently burning, like the fires of Hell” and tormenting the substance (Jung, 1967: 330). The true courage of the individual undertaking this process is depicted in the *Splendor Solis*, an alchemical text from central Germany which dates back to 1532. The following illustration is a painted version of the 16th century plate:

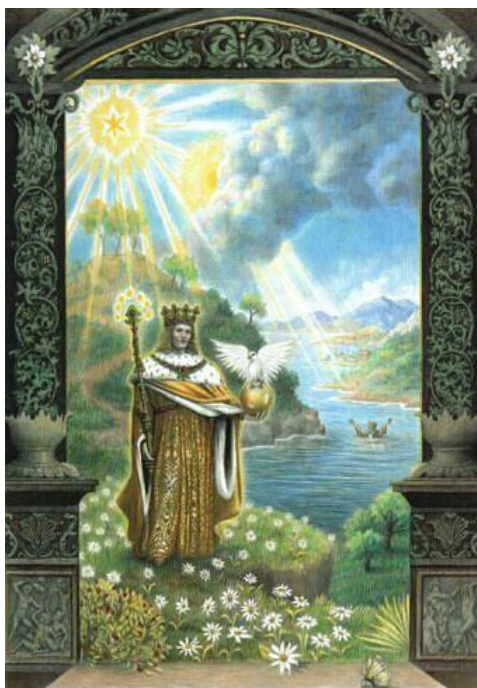


Fig 7: *Splendor Solaris* by Laurie Lipton (songsouponsea, 2001)

Individuals chooses to undertake the experiment themselves to this suffering and hardship knowing the risks, for it is the only way in which they believe they can transform the metals and the soul. In the above image the prince is shown overlooking the lake wherein the Red King (sulphur) is busy drowning. The concept of exposing oneself to hardship is clearly illustrated in this image. It shows the danger the prince has to undertake; he must delve into the depths of the sea, the depths of mercury, in order to save the king from drowning.

¹¹ Metaphor: The character burns himself out. Delves too deep into his own mind and is met with forces beyond his control - an aspect of himself he was not yet ready to face.

Although the initial phase seems endless, it is not without its reward for the individual who chooses to undergo such a transformation. If the alchemist is able to delve deep enough into the ‘sea’ of the unconscious whilst keeping both sulphur (consciousness) and mercury (unconsciousness) in focus, they would find hidden within the darkness the inner light. To explain the presence of this inner light I return to the principle of gender (see section 2.5.7).

This sea as mentioned is equated with mercury, which as I have discussed previously has a double sided nature: **masculine** and **feminine**, **mortal** and **divine**, **light** and **darkness**, **water** and **fire** and so forth. While it might seem that the sea and its illusions are the only things to exist apart from the consciousness, the alchemists of old knew that this inner darkness housed a treasure, a “hidden fire”, a “spark” which formed the “inner antithesis to the cold wetness of the sea” (Jung, 1953: 325 & Jung, 1963:160).

This spark in humankind was believed to be an imprint of God. In fact just as the sun was the image of God, this spark or hidden fire was equal to the image of the sun or God within us: “God wrought this fire in the bowels of the earth [body], just as we wrought the purging flames of hell, and in this fire God himself glows with divine life” (Jung, 1953: 331).

When at last the meditator reaches this ‘hidden light’ or ‘star’ in themselves, he / she is able to separate their soul from their body. Admiring his insights into psychic events, Jung quotes Swiss German philosopher, physician, and studier of alchemy, Paracelsus, who explains that at this point “a physical lightning will appear, the lightning of Saturn [lead/body] will separate from the lightning of Sol [soul], and what appears in this lightning pertains to longevity, to that undoubtedly great Iliaster [Prima Materia]” (as cited by Jung, 1967: 151).

One can thus distinguish between three unique events within the process: 1. The cultivation of a tranquil mind, known as ‘Nigredo’, *The Black Phase*. 2. The freeing of the soul from the impure body, known as ‘Albedo’, *The White Phase*. 3. The purification of the body (Saturn) by the Divine Mind (Jupiter) which has rid the body of its darkness and “turbulence”, known as Rubedo, *The Red Phase* (Jung, 1967: 153). However, in some texts there is also included the yellow or ‘Citrina’ phase but this is usually incorporated into the phase of ‘Rubedo’.

The combination of these events sets the stage for what has been previously referred to as the ‘sacred marriage’ between Sol and Luna or consciousness and unconsciousness as they are merged into one form. This merging is, according to the Hermetic tradition/philosophy, the true form: that of the Divine Child, Child of Wisdom¹² or the hermaphrodite who possesses the divine knowledge shared with him by the One Mind.

¹² Metaphor: The criticism of opposites (man vs woman, race vs race, belief vs belief etc.). A cultivation of a new type of human being. A being which transcends petty societal limitations.

As illustrated in the *Tabula Smaragdina* (Fig.1), the hermaphrodite as the intuitive soul stands in-line with the vertical axis formed between the All-maker, the spiritual cosmic plane and our material plane. What this suggests is that the individual's inner quintessence is finally in line with the Divine/cosmic quintessence, which are the same in nature as they were both borne from the same source. Again we see in this the principle of correspondence, 'as above, so below' (see section 2.5.1). According to the Alchemists, the pathway to God should now be open and the alchemical practitioner can finally reconnect with Him as the supposed Divine source, experience him, and 'see' the world through His eyes.

This however is not the end of the individual's process. Often found within the alchemical texts is the symbol of the Ouroboros¹³, the dragon devouring its own tail. Many philosophic elements of alchemy came to be symbolised through this serpent, especially that of paradox (Jung, 1953: 15 – 16). The paradox in this case lies in the belief that the act of self-devouring is equal to self-destruction, "but the union of the dragon's tail with the mouth [is simultaneously] also thought of as self-fertilization" (Jung, 1967: 79). The Ouroboros symbolises both death and rebirth - the death of the ego and the rebirth of the pure spirit.

The connection of the head and tail also symbolizes the belief that, firstly, all is interconnected, even the opposites, and secondly, that everything is One or from The One. The circular movement in turn demonstrates how the alchemical journey always leads back to where it starts, with the difference being that the prime matter has been purified. The Prima Materia has now become Ultima Materia. The divided soul has become whole (Jung, 1967: 79 & 235).

Another way of interpreting it would be that that which has risen to the divine must return again. This was known as the secret eighth step and it reasons that the purified individual is not to keep the divine knowledge in heaven, but is to return to earth, to the purified body, and use the newly found knowledge to improve upon this world (Kohn, 2006: 327).

The process of transformation through nigredo, albedo and rubedo can actually be broken down into seven detailed steps conveyed upon the Emerald Tablet. These seven are, calcination, dissolution and separation (forming the nigredo), conjunction, fermentation and distillation (the albedo), and finally coagulation (the rubedo).

¹³ Metaphor: The continuous cycle. What if it stopped? What if all men became content with not questioning themselves or the world? What if we as humans became stagnant?

2.9 The Seven Steps:

2.9.1. Calcination

The first half of line six upon the Emerald Tablet sums up the stage of calcination, namely that “its father is the Sun” for this is the stage of fire and is governed by the planet Saturn (Carty, 2007: 5). Chemically this is the stage during which the Prima Materia / lead is heated over the flame and is reduced to ashes (Carty, 2007: 5). Physically it can be described as a ‘cardio phase’ wherein the individual is trying to produce a metabolic spike to burn away the covering layers. It is the stripping of the products of overindulgence in order to produce a body fit for the gruelling process of transformation (Carty, 2007: 5).

Psychologically it requires the alchemist to destroy their ego and any attachments they might have to the material world; this includes possessions, status, family and so forth. It is a gruelling process which requires a great deal of patience as human beings are naturally inclined to attach and define ourselves by the objects and persons who are part of our lives, according to Carty and Haarhof. These we can refer to as our myths (Carty, 2007: 5; Haarhoff, 1998: 12).

2.9.2. Dissolution

The second stage of the alchemical transformation is that of immersion. On the Emerald Tablet it is described in the sentence: “its Mother is the Moon” and chemically, is the immersion and dissolving of the leftover ashes of the calcination stage in water – which possess the ability to corrode even the toughest metals (Carty, 2007: 45). The process of dissolution is governed by Jupiter and water which are regarded as the feminine and unconscious qualities in the individual is said to be able to break the most headstrong parts of their rational / deliberating mind.

Psychologically it is the job of the practitioner to let their conscious mind delve into the dark unconscious and to uncover any buried material which is influencing their consciousness. When these materials start to surface they must be confronted and experienced by the alchemist. These emotions, once experienced, allow him or her to become detached and freed from them (Carty, 2007: 45). Once the alchemist succeeds in this they are able to see their earthly attachments, what they mean to the practitioner and eventually let go of them completely. Often this stage is represented by a river or flowing water which also conveys the idea of the individual letting go of all rigidity and allowing him or herself to flow with their feelings.

2.9.3. Separation

As the third and final stage of the Nigredo phase (preparation phase) the separation stage is the filtering of the components of the dissolution in order to discard what is deemed unnecessary and

‘unworthy’. On the Emerald Tablet it is described under the line “The Wind carries it in its belly” and is governed by the element of air and the planet Mars.

In the psychological process it is the rediscovering of the practitioner’s essence so that they may reclaim the “visionary ‘gold’” which has been rejected by their rational side. Herein he or she inspects material which has been hidden so as to decide what will be incorporated into the refined personality or product. Usually the discarded material is mainly characterised by shame: shameful emotions brought about by societal rules which force people to hide certain aspects of themselves for the sake of fitting in; and so they constrain ourselves (Carty, 2007: 46).

2.9.4. Conjunction

Conjunction is the fourth of the seven operations and is the first within the Albedo (Whitening) phase. The Tablet states that this stage is characterised by the earth element and that this element also serves as the nurse to the subject matter or material. On a chemical level it is the recombination of the filtered elements of the separation stage into a new form. Psychologically and alchemically conjunction is the sacred marriage of the solar (masculine) and lunar (feminine) sides of the personality into a new state of consciousness which is characterised by a greater sense of intuition.

Referring back to the discussion on Son, Lunar, Sulphur and Mercury, Son and Sulphur are considered the thinking-type consciousness and attention whereas Luna and Mercury are considered to be the feeling-type consciousness and intention (Hauck, 2011: 77). When the practitioner is able to unite both their feminine and masculine consciousness they craft what is referred to as the Lesser Stone; an object with the ability to turn base metals into silver and a process at the end of which he or she “is able to clearly discern what needs to be done to achieve lasting enlightenment” and their union with the Self and the One (Carty, 2007:5).

2.9.5. Fermentation

The fifth stage is that of Fermentation and described as the Putrefaction of the hermaphroditic ‘child’ of the Conjunction stage, which eventually results in the death and resurrection into a new stronger being. On chemical level it is the growth of bacteria in the created solution. This is a natural occurrence that takes place in milk, wine and other organic substances which eventually transform them.

On a psychological level it is the stage during which the individual becomes inspired by spiritual power from Above which introduces new life energy into the alchemist; and “out of the blackness of their Putrefaction comes the yellow ferment, which appears like a golden wax flowing out of the foul

matter of the soul” and is displayed in magnificent colours and visions known as the ‘Peacock’s Tail’ (Carty, 2007: 48).

According to the alchemists this inspiration is brought about by intense prayer, deep meditation and a breakdown of the personality in order to come into contact with something beyond themselves. Through this meditation the individual allows a space for something new to grow and take shape.

2.9.6. Distillation

Distillation is stage six of the transformation process. On a chemical level it is the boiling of the fermented solution in order to purify it. This stage, like fermentation, is also included in the process of making wine and brandy. Psychologically the individual sublimates their psychic forces so as to ensure that no impurities (those raised by the ego and the unconsciousness) are carried over into the final phase of the transformation. To distil themselves, the alchemist does introspection in order to raise said psyche to new levels of purity. At this level the person is free of sentimentality, emotion or any identification with the ‘I’ as the personal identity (Carty, 2007: 49).

2.9.7. Coagulation

We reach the seventh and final stage of the Opus, coagulation. Chemically it is the precipitation of the distilled substance. On a psychological level this is the stage during which the alchemist is finally raised to a state of absolute confidence which is characterised by possession of the highest of aspirations. The alchemist is in the ultimate state of awareness and from them the Ultima Materia of their soul is released. Physically the Divine Elixir or the Stone rejuvenates the body to become the perfect vessel.

By outlining the seven steps of the Opus a summary of how both the esoteric and exoteric materials and practices run parallel with each other was offered. Each physical step and result has a psychological and spiritual equivalent and vice versa. Each metal or solution has a twin in the form of the human consciousness or unconsciousness just as each physical step equates to how the psyche should be treated to become pure. Because it can be difficult to grasp and keep a hold on the various alchemical symbols I believe that outlining these seven steps will show the reader where the majority of the paper’s focus will be placed – using these steps as a guideline to write a play and merely using the symbols as inspiration for story ideas.

This chapter provided a fragment of the mystery which is alchemy, and outlined the basic elements of complicated task involved in crafting the philosopher’s stone. The question which should now be addressed is how this relates to the art of playwriting and to growth of the dramatic writer. Do they share elements on an esoteric or perhaps exoteric level and how can one draw any links between writing and the seven step Opus.

CHAPTER 3: THE WRITER AND THE **ALCHEMIST**

Finding correlations between the art of playwriting and alchemy is not a new idea. In fact one could say that the two practices share a long history if one considers the fact that art, science and religion were not divided fields in the past. As Literary Nobel Prize winner Thomas Mann states, “at the root of culture lies cult”, and in many ways it can be said that both writer and alchemist have cultist like focus and influence on culture (Baigent & Leigh, 1997: 179).

I refer again to the fact that the three divine figures of Hermeticism – Thoth, Hermes, and Hermes Trismegistus - were considered to be the gods and masters of both writing and magic. This interwoven nature between cult and art meant that the Hermetic and alchemical hands had touched all branches of cultural practice, from architectural marvels to soul stirring music, hypnotic paintings to literature, theatre and even gardening and landscaping (Baigent & Leigh, 1997: 180).

The reality of a shared nature between the writer and alchemist is then far from fictitious. It is however one which needs to be expanded upon in order for us to fully appreciate the similarities. To do this I will touch on the qualities both arts share with one another as well as with Hermeticism.

3.1 Eso- and Exoteric Nature

Expanding on the conclusion at the end of Chapter Two it can now be discussed how the dual nature of the alchemical operations - the physical steps that mirror the spiritual transformation within the practitioner - relates to writing. When approaching a blank page, as a writer, I often feel that I am for all intents and purposes approaching a mirror reflecting my most inner thoughts.

Though this is not true for all writers, for myself and perhaps for other writers of plays and fiction, one could argue that the written line originates from the ‘source’, namely, the unconscious self. Through conscious focus on the work the page becomes a passage between the material, spiritual and psychological realm, channelling the unconscious (Haarhoff, 1998: 199). As the alchemist places themselves within their work a writer may consciously take up residence within his / her ideas and materials which reflect and speak to his / her own unconscious (Haarhoff, 1998: 199 & Jung, 1953: 6).

Some writers tell of their use of meditation, prayer, fasting and chanting in order help unblock their channels of creativity; as well as the therapeutic benefits which these practices hold. The act of writing can thus become a platform for conscious self-reclamation, for the writer has the potential

become aware of his / her inner struggles and strives to gain control over their consciousness which is so easily enslaved by its counterpart (Bishop & Starkey, 2006: 74, 178 & 179).

These material and psychological changes become observable to the writer, both from within and outside of him / her. If the world is nothing but subjective projection, then the changing of the practitioner's conscious relationship to the unconscious directly changes the material reality for them as well. In turn these exo- and esoteric changes have the potential to extend beyond the writer once we examine the role of the audience and their contact with the material.

Watching a performance or reading a text, the reader, though separated from the writer to a degree, can also be affected by the content, although it might be more difficult with the former scenario. When reading a play or book, the reader is more directly connected to the writer's thoughts. During the viewing of a performance, the audience member is viewing a director's interpretation of a story, yet it does not change the fact that both can influence the reader or viewer in some psychological way. And so the potential exists for reality to be altered yet again. This is however dependant on how the individual receives the thematic content of the text or performance and whether or not the writer's or director's ideas are being expressed clearly enough by him or herself (Baker, 1919: 509 - 510 & Bishop & Starkey, 2006: 113).

3.2 Solitary work

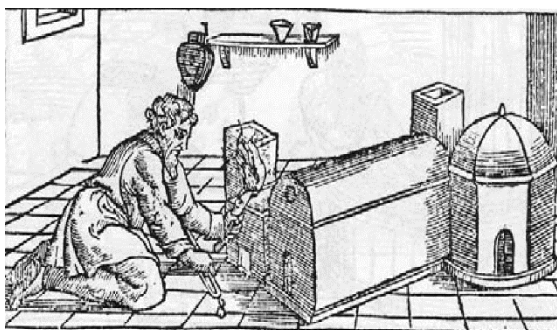


Fig 8: Chambers for the condensation of mercury (Katz, 1978)

Many visual artworks depict the alchemist alone in their laboratory and hidden from the outside world, as illustrated to the left and on the following page.

Yet ironically he weaves the very fabrics of reality, both inside and outside the laboratory. This irony lends itself to the writer as well, though the idea of isolation should not be mistaken for physical separation necessarily.

Many writers of fiction according to Haarhof prefer to immerse themselves in the public domain, turning it into a personal workstation as well as fuel for their creativity (Haarhoff, 1998: 35).

Writers are also known to collaborate on literary works and scripts, each contributing their share of writing, or at the very least, lending advice to how it

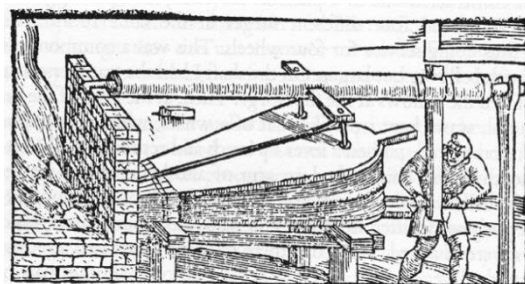


Fig: 9 Operation of a bellows with a rocking bar (Katz, 1978)



Fig 10: "The First Stage of the Great Work" by Hans Vredeman de Vries (Hauck, 2014)

practitioner's own responsibility. Its implementation becomes crucial for the effective facilitation of personal growth and the perfecting of the practitioner's writing skill and artistic experiment. Ultimately this makes it solitary in nature (Morley, 2007: 8 & Jung, 1967: 300).

should be approached (Bishop & Starkey, 2006: 136). In a similar way many alchemists rely on the help of apprentices who wish to learn under the masters.

But even though this physical collaboration does exist, and in whichever way the practitioner may wish to approach the practice, none can carry the operations for the individual. In the act of writing as well as physical alchemical

experimentation the self-reflection and sacrifice of time and effort is the

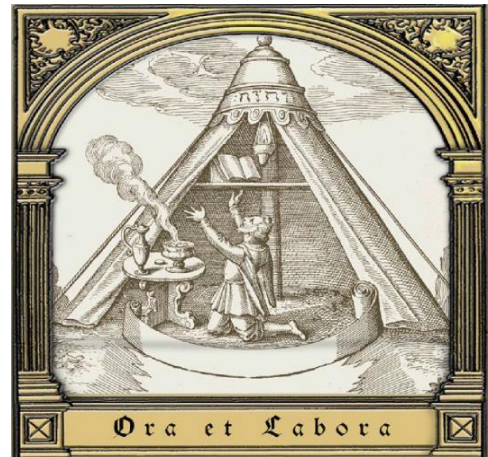


Fig 11: "Ora et Labora" by Katlyn Breene, 2007 (as cited by Hauck, 2014)

3.3 Micro- and Macrocosm

The micro- and macrocosm refers to the concept of 'As above, so below' (see section 2.5.2). The relationship between the One and the universe is no different from the relationship between the alchemist and the elixirs or the writer and the project. Just as the universe and its inhabitants contain the signature and essence of The One, so does the written work contain the writer's signature style and voice. The writer's voice refers to the unique way in which in which he or she selects and moulds the words on the page, the form and structure of their work, the rhythm he lends the actions and dialogue, and the stance they take towards the chosen topic (Haarhoff, 1998: 92 & 156 & Harper, 2006: 3).

The shared characteristics between the macrocosm and its inhabitants immediately make us aware of interconnection and interdependence between all living and non-living matter in the natural equilibrium. In a similar way one can observe the interdependence between the 'voice' of the writer, their idea, the characters, and the chosen setting. The removal of even just a single one of these links would cause everything else to change in some way, whether it be good or bad, effective or ineffective to the story.

As gods of our work, our thoughts become reality on the page and eventually self-sustaining, and when looking again at the *Tabula Smaragdina* (Fig 1.) we see this concept of autonomy clearly

illustrated by the two suns in the upper half of the plate. Within Hermeticism the two suns are referred to as 'Mind the Maker' and explains the relationship between thought and matter (Hauck, 2011: 77).

In it the black sun represents the One Mind whose thought (bearing in mind that thought houses power) gave birth to the second sun, or the universe. This universe in itself became self-sustaining through the autonomous development of its own archetypal energies and natural laws (Hauck, 2011: 77).

This mirrors the very art of writing if considered that the writer's thought gives birth to a materialised idea on page; an idea in which the working parts (characters and plot) develop their own unique and shared energy. This energy eventually starts to govern the ebb and flow of the events and actions of the story (Principle of Cause and Effect and Rhythm, see section 2.5.5 & 2.5.6). The alchemist and the writer are storytellers, both directly and indirectly, of the origin of all things and they condense this tale into a potent product, the philosopher's stone, which possesses the power to alter its environment.

3.4 Perception and Material

If alchemy is the art of transmutation and the hastened, but natural, transformation of things, it would require its practitioner to be knowledgeable about nature's laws and the rules of natural transformation. Of course this would also require a heightened perception and an opening up of the mind so that they may take in these observations objectively and without any presuppositions. However, this becomes difficult in a world built on the basis of the individual's unconscious projections.

It is then crucial that both the alchemist and the writer become conscious of the unconscious influence within them. It is crucial that they start experiencing the world through a new active awareness. As conveyors of the true nature of things it is mandatory that both the alchemist and the writer start experiencing life beyond the illusion of their five senses (sight, sound, taste, smell and touch) (Morley, 2007: 8). Many Taoists refer to this state as the 'sixth sense' or a synchronicity of the five senses, although there is no true English expression that truly captures the Taoist meaning (Zhang, 2015). Within this state the meditator is able to see himself/herself and the world for what they truly are - one.

It becomes the experience beyond superficial experience. It becomes truth. And to both the observant and self-reflective artistic writer and to the alchemist there is no more crucial a goal than the attainment and implementation of truth to reflect or represent and exact change within the world.

3.5 Strippers of Customs

Society stands on a large base of established customs – each different in every culture and country. These help maintain a sense of order amongst people, but there always exists the danger that it could lead to the blinding of people to the true nature of things. Preconceptions may filter out any truths which could threaten these said cultures and customs and so this same custom which creates uniformity might also be problematic and harmful. Realities which were once purposefully ignored may either become forgotten or could made out to be pure myths and fantasies within a world plagued by too much rationality or sentimentality. When the writer and alchemist sacrifice themselves to truth they become revived by it and what was once familiar is now looked upon through new eyes, like those of a child explains Morley:

“Writing is an extreme act of attention and memory; it pleads with your brain cells to make new connections. As neurologists put it, neurons that fire together, wire together and inspiration could be more natural *to* and more nurtured *in* a writer because they simply read the world (and the world of literature) a little closer when they were children”

(Morley, 2007: 8).

Through the work they conduct, writers and alchemists try to bring about this change in others, showing them possible realities and raising questions which challenge the accepted norm as well as the dependence on the illusion created by habits. The work of the artist thus sets forth a chain reaction of defamiliarization which starts with the individual and spreads to those who come into contact with the created product.

To the audience the realisation of truth is never a pleasant experience because we mostly fear that which we do not understand. However, Jung goes on to explain that this fear needs to be overcome in order for us to grow mentally and spiritually:

“Whatever reality may be, functionally at all events they behave just like realities. We should not let ourselves be so blinded by the modern rationalistic fear of superstition that we lose sight completely of those little-known psychic phenomena which surpass our present scientific understanding”

(Jung, 1967: 159)

3.6 Cryptic Expression

In earlier chapters I mentioned that, 1) alchemists kept their work purposefully obscure, so as to protect their art from puffers as well as the church, and 2) many of the metaphors were also drawn over from astrology to help convey the specific characteristics of the materials being worked with.

One can however draw on one more purpose of the cryptic nature of alchemy which, according to Jung, is implemented by psychological alchemy.

What he is referring to is the act of *amplificatio* or ‘amplification’. This is when vague and mysterious concepts are enlarged by analogies and symbolism and enter into the realm of psychology so as to be understood more clearly (Jung, 1967: 277). In essence this is no different from what I am trying to achieve within this experiment. By finding and drawing connections between alchemical metaphors and writing, this experiment is an effort to expand upon the unknown and uncertainties of the writer’s process.

It can then be said that human beings are constantly drawing correlations between various ideas and objects and one merely needs to turn on the television or radio and listen to the first advertisement to realise this; after all, amplification and association are the very basis on which marketing and art was built.

Bishop and Starkey explain that many linguists also believe that metaphor “is ingrained in our thought processes”, that “people are not aware of the metaphors that direct their thoughts and language, [and that] these basic metaphors permeate our language” (Bishop and Starkey, 2006: 114). Ironically then one can state that, although the writer and the alchemist are the seekers of truth, they are also the weavers of illusions, illusions which are meant to unlock truth by broadening our understanding - revelatory trickery if you will.

Like the alchemist the writer’s arsenal consists of imagery, metaphor, simile, sound, rhythm and characters which help him contract the form of the idea, making it potent, but simultaneously expanding its meaning (Bishop & Starkey, 2006: 113 & Haarhoff, 1998: 85). Thematically the writer is getting the reader to see the perception “through the lens of another” (Haarhoff, 1998: 85). He is “dramatizing an idea, playing with space, making it larger than life” (Haarhoff, 1998: 85).

3.7 Seekers of Emotional Truth

The acts of perception and self-reflection naturally concern themselves with human emotion and, although many deny it, some believe that humans are more often than not driven by our emotions rather than rationality. It is for this reason that the writer aims at manipulating the emotions of the reader / audience above all else. In his introduction to *The House of Usna* William Sharp sums up the importance of emotion perfectly when he writes that:

“I do not live only in the past but in the present, in these dramas of the mind. The names stand for elemental passions, and I can come to them through my own gates of today as well as through the ancient portals of Aischylos or Sophocles or Euripides”

(as cited in Baker, 1976: 65 – 66).

What he states so beautifully, is that although times and customs change from generation to generation, the existence of emotions as influencing forces on human nature still remains resolute. As a primal part of our psyche, the influencing of our emotions means the very influencing of the way we view our world. Keeping this in mind William Faulkner summed up three characteristics required by the writer to practice the influential art effectively: experience, observation and imagination (as cited in Morley, 2007: 45).

Of the three he regarded experience the highest, branching out in both the streams of physical and psychological reality (as cited in Morley, 2007: 327). When reading play there exists the potential for the individual to actively suspend their sense of reality through imagination, to enter into the world presented within the text. This could also hold true for a stage performance, but this depends on how accurately the performer can communicate the essence of the text and whether or not the director has stayed true to the text. If both mediums are effective then when human beings are shown caught within difficult situation, it has the potential to speak to the individual's interests, their emotions - whether they support or oppose the characters.

The reader or viewer begins to question the events, judging them by their own morality, and if effective, 'memorialize' them. This act might tear at their own reality as they turn the presented truth into their own personal truth (as cited in Baker, 1976: 44), (Bishop & Starkey, 2006: 94) & (Morley, 2007: 45).

It is for this reason that writers regard emotional truth higher than its rational counterpart, for rational truth lends little effort to the imagination. It becomes dull, uninteresting and impenetrable. Alchemists praise emotion just as highly and both during and out of meditation they make the effort of paying close attention to the emotions which arise within them (How The Alchemists Achieved Their Transformations, 2014).

The many graphical illustrations of alchemy, of the Great Work, as well as the amount of cryptic symbolism proves, as Holmyard states, that "the language of symbolism affords much scope for the exercise of imagination and holds many pitfalls (...) appealing rather to the emotions and aspirations than to intelligence" (Holmyard, 1957: 159).

They actively follow these emotions, tracing them back to the source, the psyche, and try to understand them. In psychological alchemy these emotions are projections of the unconscious, and by understanding and registering them as projections the alchemist can achieve the sacred marriage of the rational with the emotional, can develop the intuition needed to transcend and actively change their world. The practitioner can challenge the illusion perceived at first and as result achieve a divine state of consciousness. (How The Alchemists Achieved Their Transformations, 2014).

This revelation is always repeated by the writer during their experimentation. Within every written work and during every writing exercise, the writer unconsciously reveals emotions within himself / herself. These can be viewed as autobiographical breadcrumbs or signatures which readers and viewers are able to follow. If the writer is conscious enough, they will see these traces of self in the work and be able to lead themselves back to the past or present sources of these betrayed emotions. Only then will the writer be able to question his/her objectivity and be able to rework the material to bring objective truth to the foreground.

3.8 The Power of Words

This principle corresponds closely with semiotics in the way that a word is regarded as a vehicle which houses meaning and concept. As stated previously, the ancient Egyptians believed that these meanings weren't only concepts, but magic with the ability to bring about physical changes in the world (see section 2.3). That is to say that the articulation of a thought is the manifestation of it in our world (Carty, 2007: 54). Carty expands on this ancient belief within his description of the word-to-consciousness connection as well as of Hermeticism.

“To know something’s name was to have complete control over it, because it provided a focus for the use of directed thought. Consciousness is a force in the universe, and words really do have power. Words can be sacred, and being well-spoken in the Hermetic sense is connecting your words with the archetypal essences that give them power and meaning. You are yourself the living Word of the cosmos, and you embody the sulphuric awareness and mercurial imagination that materialize the salt of existence. And if you can clear yourself of all the falsity, fantasy, and ignorance around you, if you can return to your most innocent essence, you too can work the miracles of Hermes”

(Carty, 2007: 54).

This belief meant that poets and bards were highly respected and regarded as being sacred in times of old. Not only were they sacred but were believed to possess great power on the battlefield - invoking fear within their enemies through incantations. Even by ‘naming’ an individual (invoking him specifically in a poem or a so-called ‘satire’ or imprecation) it was believed that the bard, poet or druid could curse the individual and their descendants even “unto the seventh generation” (Baigent & Leigh, 1997: 44 – 45). In the world of the play, these words of magic are mostly found within dialogue which is one of the main drives of theatre performance, along with action.

Dramatic dialogue is tasked with the role of conveying the facts needed to move the story forward, in other words, to deliver exposition in text based theatrical forms. But unlike factual non-fiction, fictional dialogue does not make a habit of doing this at face value. Instead one can distinguish

between two channels of communication found within a play: The first is shared communication and dialogue between characters. The second is found between the characters and the audience / reader who usually stands apart from the action.

However, it should not be assumed that these two channels relay the same information when dialogue is being exchanged. In fact, more often than not, what is said between characters gives birth to subtext which the writer creates to be interpreted by the reader or audience (Haarhoff, 1998: 244). They serve as a signpost or hint to the reader / viewer to follow and to discover the true meaning of what is being said - a discovery of the magic beyond them (Haarhoff, 1998: 244).

Thus rhythm and sound share the same importance as vocabulary. Language is after all polymorphic and by listening to the tone and rhythm of a spoken line there can be distinguished between the perspective and feeling its speaker has towards the information being conveyed. This musicality within speech helps conjure specific energies within a scene, and as Shepard and Wallis explain, both sentence and scene share the characteristics of rise-and-fall patterns and tone. The cadence of scene “comes from the shape of the dialogue’s energy as much as that of action” (Shepard & Wallis, 2002: 46). But just as dialogue is a conveyer of energy, it is also a creator of worlds.

Unlike film, which has the potential benefit of being shot on location or having computer generated imagery at its disposal; theatre is restricted in its use of space. For this reason it is crucial that the dialogue not only generate enough energy and emotion to accurately communicate the intended truths but that it succeeds in making worlds *according* to the spatial restrictions that are specific to theatre. There is little use in discussing the role of stage descriptions at this stage, as each director uses their own visual style, but it is however possible to discuss dialogue and its role in the creation of inner imaginary worlds.

People construct and come to understand their worlds through language. In a very basic sense a word is a building block of imagery and within a dialogue information and meaning is communicated and received through mutual participation in sensemaking. According to Deborah Tannen, a professor of linguistics at the Georgetown University in Washington, the creation of images plays a major part in this participation (Downing, Lima & Noonan, 1992: 32). At one end there exists the speaker suggesting and describing images through words. At the other end there is the listener / reader who absorbs these words to create an image based on the description as well as on their own past experiences.

Words thus have the power to evoke the senses through the creation of imagery. What cultivates understanding within a theatre environment is the fact that they are used to describe and facilitate relationships between people. This person to person dynamic can be recognised and understood regardless of culture or personality because we recognise the essence of the relationships within our own lives through The Principle of Correspondence.

What's more is that the use of dialogue not only generates a recognisable truth between characters but also a truth within characters. Through each character's use of language, one can gain insight into their minds, how they experience their worlds and other characters, how they feel about themselves, and finally, what their goals are. With the absorption of character dialogue and description, and with the construction of relatable imagery in our own minds, the spatial limitations of the theatre melt away, because it does not feed a rational truth, but rather an emotional one.

3.9 Stage Action / Physicality

Although a large part of stage action is influenced by directorial style, the playwright is still able to state how actions could be staged by means of stage directions. The writer does this not to force the director into a certain style but merely to provide advice on what he / she thinks the best approach might be for the sake of effective presentation and communication of theme.

Alchemists have and still assist each other in the same way. The number of alchemical handbooks and tomes published are numerous, and more and more are making their way to public bookshelves and websites each day. The first similarity can be found when considering the role of text. It should be remembered that a play, just like any written or drawn alchemical guideline, is created to be created. The question of whether it is done in a theatre or in a laboratory makes no difference.

"The seed and its earth being thus prepared nothing remains but a judicious conjunction of them together; for if too much moisture prevails, the philosophical egg may be burst before it can go through the heat necessary for its hatching. To speak without a figure, our subject must now be enclosed in a small glass vial, made strong enough to bear a due heat, which is to be raised gradually to the highest degree: the best form for this vessel being that of an oil flask, with a long neck; but these are much too thin in substance for this operation"

(Albertus, 1974: 80)

What these 9 points in the chapter then reveal is the mutual goal between the writer and the alchemist on both a physical and psychological plane. In order for audience and personal projections to change, a physical sacrifice of experimentation and observation is required. The writer in this sense must actively study their surroundings and shape their writing if they wish to start seeing traces of their own subjective views in them. Only in this way can one start to exercise self-discipline in the art and open the door to self-reflection.

Both the writer and the alchemist must cultivate a healthy balance of objectivity and subjectivity (Sol and Luna) if they wish not only to eliminate unwanted projections but also if they wish to find their place within the interconnected macrocosm of the world and link it to their experiments as an observable microcosm.

For this microcosm to have any effect on a greater scale, the Opus demands an understanding of the seven hermetic principles, the rules of nature and existence. Only once the writer and the alchemist fully understand them, can they use them to manipulate the microcosm and finally the macrocosm and by stripping customs and revealing truths through cryptic expression.

I believe it is safe to say then that the art of writing and that of alchemy share a great deal of practices and philosophies. This in turn makes the theory of having a mutual guideline (namely, the seven step Magnum Opus) all the more promising. Henceforth I will be discussing each of the steps in detail and how I went about implementing them throughout the experiment.

CHAPTER 4: THE MAGNUM OPUS

Nigredo – The Black Phase

4.1 Calcination: Preparing the Self

In this phase the individual submits themselves to the torture of fire and burns away all that which is unnecessary to them. What one sets out to achieve is a mind fit for receiving creative impulses, building confidence, and which does not carry unnecessary weight. By weight I'm referring to ego and false attachments around which people build personal myths (Carty, 2007: 5).

Jung was a firm believer in the theory of the 'personal myth'. According to him all individuals are born into prescribed roles which are drafted upon us by parents, teachers and culture. People unconsciously live according to these myths which constitute their behaviour and way of thinking (Haarhoff, 1998: 12).

The writer as a seeker of truth is no different. If the practitioner is to enter into the purging process successfully then it becomes necessary for them to identify the myths which would affect the creative process and to remove them as they hinder the discovery of the self. To Morley it is important that the writer place the focus first and foremost on self-knowledge before he makes any attempts at writing:

“For any prospective writer, it helps to know who you are, what role you are playing and what you wish your language to perform. Many myths and metaphors swirl around the discipline of creative writing. A student is an apprentice to writing and, by innocent attachment; to those self-same myths (. . .) it is hard for them to know who they are; if they are a writer at all; whether they are somebody who has never really left the audience who is still lost in the book”

(Morley, 2007: 11).

To introduce some specificity to the myth theory, Haarhoff distinguishes between two types of myth: major and minor (Haarhoff, 1998: 12). Major myths are stories which people use to help them make sense of the reason for existence. These tales are mostly found within creation tales in religion, mythology, and other forms of fiction which ground themselves on metaphor (Haarhoff, 1998: 14).

Rather than focus on human commonality, minor myths are built around concepts of race, gender, class, religion, liberation, and market orientation. They seek to divide humanity into set groups by structuring boundaries and rules. These groups allow those among them who meet the necessary requirements and reject or shun those who don't (Haarhoff, 1998: 12). These defensive, group

orientated myths in turn give rise to personal myths - a way of defining the self according to the relationship it shares with these groups.

These are notions such as: “I am my family”, “I must do this”, “people will judge me if I do or believe that”, “I am not good enough” and so forth. Hauck refers to these as false constellations of reality and which need to be burned away in order to uncover the true self (Hauck, 2014: 10). Governed by the fire of the calcinations phase I set out to identify the major myths which tied themselves to me in my role as aspiring writer (all for the sake of burning them later) and found the following to be the most prominent:

4.1.1. Identifying My Personal Myths

Firstly, ‘that the audience is to be feared’. Secondly, ‘as writer, myself and my work must be perfect’. Thirdly, ‘that I cannot write because I possess no talent’. And lastly, ‘that my work must be original’. It is important that the writer address each one of these identified myths individually for doing so will reveal a shared characteristic between them.

Myth One: Fear the Audience

Fear of the audience is one of the primary reasons writers experience writer’s block. In fact this fear is fatal to the flow of creativity according to American award winning writer Ursula Le Guin (Bishop & Starkey, 2006: 22). In order to rid ourselves of it the writer must come to grips with the fact that their writing will not please everyone and that while they are engaged in the process they must solely be focused on writing, blocking out any thoughts of reader or audience criticism. To do anything else is to neglect being completely consciously active in the present in the Opus (Carty, 2007: 54 & Tolle, 1997: 19).

Exercise: Draw and Recall

(To accompany this section, see 1st and 2nd page of *Doodles and Mandalas* addendum.) As an exercise I decided to transport myself back to my childhood when I first learned how to write - an exercise prescribed by Haarhoff (Haarhoff, 1998: 19 - 20). Using a few coloured pens and a few scraps of paper, I set about drawing a room I remembered playing in whilst growing up in my childhood home. The catch was that I had to do this using my non-dominant hand, this being my left. After fifteen minutes of demanding drawing I proceeded to spend another fifteen minutes writing about the room and what it meant to me - again using my left hand. Naturally this was a slow and frustrating process due to the fact that I was completely uncoordinated using my non-dominant hand and desired the precision of the right.

During the exercise I observed that my thoughts were initially directed to how horrible my drawing and handwriting looked and then thought about how harshly others would judge it if they ever were to see it. Even my grammar and style became affected under the intense concentration, with my sentences growing shorter and my wording simpler. I was ultimately a child; an individual who sacrificed much of his critical rationality for creativity. Though my drawing might not have looked great the process showed me how to activate my imagination and represent things in a different way on the page.

However, after reflecting on the exercise I found that the vigorous concentration on my movements, trying more and more to improve upon my drawing and handwriting, had later started silencing not only the world around me but also my critical thoughts which usually bombarded me during creative processes. This was because I was completely present. In many Buddhist teachings this is a place of Zen, for in the present we are removed from the past and future psychological time (Tolle, 1997: 37).

Going back to my research I discovered that I had achieved what Morley refers to as *the switch*, a suspended state the writer enters, a zone of abnormal concentration which he couples with action (Morley, 2007: 105). The process is gruelling, and though the reward for my effort was not immediate, I was able to get an idea of the required stamina needed to activate this switch and silence my mind during the process. In a sense this was its own Lesser Stone which revealed the actions needed to craft the Greater Stone of concentration¹⁴.

Myth Two and Three: Errors Make Up the Talentless Writer

The second and third of my held beliefs are that there is no room for error and that succumbing to them showed a lack of talent. After all true writers are born with expert skill and flawless expression, are they not? This belief would have any individual stricken with page fright right from the start. In fact, it is an impossible ideal to live up to. As a result many an aspiring writer has turned away from the craft before having dabbled in it at all.

Over the years I have found that the fear of perfection usually results in long periods of procrastination. This fear has turned me into a deadly self-critic and drains me of the creative energy required to experiment and enjoy with the craft. What is necessary is to realize the following:

“That a ‘good enough for now’ [play] may not be strictly metered. You do this because you realize you're not yet practiced enough and that it will take until your tenth or twentieth [play] to achieve an enviable flow...Writers would prefer to appear expert from the first day they

¹⁴ It should be noted however that this process, like the whole of the Opus, needs to be repeated several times in order for it to be perfected. Alchemists spend their entire lives trying to achieve mastery of the Opus and its materials.

write to the last. Often they feel that to admit to anything less than mastery, to reveal and examine composing processes, to evince a learning curve is to appear – or to be – uninspired and inexperienced, a real novice. Equally, to have to toil, to work long and hard at craft is to admit another sort of deficiency. Surely the creative simply create, galvanized by a muse, unlike the lesser workaday mortal”

(Bishop & Starkey, 2006: 20 – 21).

Instead of striving for perfection the writer needs to rewire their consciousness to view *mistakes* as *opportunities* and the blank page as a world filled with *possibilities* (Morley, 2007: 1 – 2). As someone who desires immediate results, I knew I had to accept that a good product takes time and that the experimentation process could and should be enjoyed as well.

During my writing and drawing exercise I had forced myself to stay patient and present, even whilst my illustrations, handwriting and grammar weren't necessarily on par with my usual work. I tried finding the joy and humour in creating with an object as foreign to me as my non-dominant hand and that transported me back to the kindergarten – years engaged in drawing and writing assignments given to us by our teacher. Dropping the mask of the professional and donning the mask of the child gave me permission to take myself less seriously, to shamelessly talk to myself out loud through my writing.

Exercise: Free-writing & Finding the Inner Child

(See Page 9 of *Delving into the Unconscious* addendum for extracts). The discovery of the ‘inner child’ led me to a second exercise commonly known as the ‘free-writing exercise’. It required me to speed write, without pause, for fifteen minutes. During this time I was not allowed to think about an initial topic, what I would follow each written sentence, what I had already written and whether or not it made any sense at all. The aim was primarily to engage in the act (an active meditation) even if it meant writing complete rubbish. In fact, the more senseless it would become the better, for it shows the creative right brain being freed from the critical left brain (Haarhoff, 1998: 61 – 62).

After fifteen minutes I stopped. Before rereading what I had written, I firstly reflected on the process itself. The first problem I faced was the bombardment of personal logic. Within all the topics I covered I was continuously thinking of a rational thought line to connect them all, to yield a greater theme. Everything had to make sense and because of this self-established requirement I often found myself stalling, not knowing what to write next. My logical brain was stoking my fear of error and the myth of perfection. It was hindering my expression greatly.

I decided to retry the exercise, but took a second to establish that the adult within me had no place here. If this exercise was to be done properly I'd have to embrace the child once more. I'd have to impulsively jump on the bicycle stripped of breaks and dart down the hill, not worrying about the consequences – a stunt I actually attempted during my childhood, but on rollerblades... Naturally this did not end too well, but this at least gave me something to relate the exercise too.

I was writing again only this time much of which I put to paper was impulsive and completely absurd. Irrational repetitions, absurd statements and unreasoned contradictions filled the page as if a madman had gone to work smashing their head on the page. After my second attempt I decided to read through the products of both exercises.

The products contrasted one another like day and night. The work of my initial attempt was mostly self-reflexive, wherein I stated and reasoned much of what I had been thinking and feeling over the past few days and generally at present. This was coupled with all the activities I had engaged in during the prior days and how that might have influenced my general thoughts and feelings at the time. Again I remarked at how much the content was characterised by a logical and linear flow, as if telling a story with a specific theme in mind.

The product of my second attempt jumped the track of rationality and skid out of control. Instead of logical and linear self-reflection, the piece lent the majority of its contents to: 1) what read like the repetitious squabble over imaginary figures, such as Mini Moose and the burning wine farm and Wonder Dog running, running, running . . . 2) The present state of things around me, such as the objects and events I was perceiving. 3) How each sight, sound and touch I was experiencing made me feel and the random associations I made with them (see pg. 13 – 15 of *Delving into Unconscious* addendum).

Trivial events and observations like the dog “running, running, running” past the door, the humming of the refrigerator, or the tapping of the blinds against the window (to mention but a few) presented an array of topics to write about, none of which had any relation to each other at all. And even if the ideas didn't come quick enough there was no fault to be found in losing control and in writing the same word or line over and over until a new impulse arose. This happened numerous times and encouraged quite a bit of laughter from my side, but most importantly a childlike enjoyment and experimentation with the craft.

What gave rise to the difference between these two pieces was my state of ‘being’. During the first my consciousness was directed towards the immaterial. The past, as well as the emotions I discussed were all elements which required me to rely on memory, but nothing which I could obtain a solid grasp on.

The second attempt had me actively present once again. The elements of time and preconception had less of an influence on me, as I directed my consciousness to the world around me. I had opened

myself to present impulses which I had completely missed while I was previously lost in the inner workings of my mind (Tolle, 1997: 40). I was now an empty cup which could be filled with new ideas and experiences. A blank page. A world of possibilities. An individual who temporarily stepped away from ego to make room for other focus points.

In summary, I came to the realization that the act of writing, just like the Opus, requires the mind to stay present within the timeless space. While it is safe to have a goal to which one works towards, the consciousness must stay present and alert to new bits and pieces of information which lead it. This keeps the writer objective and turns the process into an active experiment rather than a stale and passive routine.

Morley explains that in time this intense concentration will become second nature. It will reach a point where consciousness does not require the draining amounts of energy it did at first and will enter into what John Keats referred to as ‘negative capability’ – “when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact [or] reason” (Morley, 2007: 106). The state of presence is also a state of complete honesty. Unfortunately I myself, and I can only guess the same with many others, don’t always wish to acknowledge certain truths or myths within myself, at least not directly.

Due to this it often becomes necessary to trick the mind into revealing things that individuals in general would not like to see in themselves. For the sake of emphasis on the importance of emotional truth as well as to aid the prospective writers, I will describe some useful exercises inspired by Morley, with the hope that the reader might experiment with them during their own Calcination phase.

The Door

The individual must imagine a door, any door in any place (be it in their house or out in the wilderness). The writer should try to write down as much detail about the door as possible and then proceed to imagine themselves stepping through it. The writer must imagine themselves stepping into an unknown world. Proceed to describe the first three things you notice and making use of all the senses (touch, taste, smell, sound and sight). You start to hear sounds in the distance. What are they? How far are they? You follow the sound and approach signs. What do they say? You look up and around you. What is the weather like? You hear footsteps behind you and turn around. Who is standing there? What are they saying? Do you know them?

I have spoken about delving into the unconscious as mentioned by Jung (see page 36), but this isn’t always possible for a beginner who doesn’t necessarily know how to start. Ask yourself, ‘what feeling do I get from reading my descriptions?’ ‘Is there a theme or atmosphere which runs through the

account?’ ‘Did the place have a touch of familiarity and did I know the individual(s) I spoke to?’ This exercise acts as a controlled practice with which he / she can glimpse into aspects which influence their thinking.

The Stranger

Make a list of likes and dislikes you have, experiences in your past and possible future experiences. Write about your character / personality and how it changes from situation to situation. Now, sit in front of a mirror and try and look yourself in the eyes for 10 minutes. If you lose concentration, gather your thoughts and continue to look at yourself. Make mental notes of what you notice about your appearance (your dress, hair, posture etc.). What is new? Write down your notes and then go back to the mirror. Try and look at yourself as if you are another person. Make notes on what you see. Lastly The writer should compare the notes he / she made.

What differences stand out? Which way of thinking influences your day-to-day personality and actions the most? This exercise touches on the Jungian theory of unconscious projection which I spoke about in Chapter 2.8.1. Whereas we looked at the account of *Jason* and *Andrea* as an example, with this exercise the individual can confront himself / herself with what is true and what are merely illusions created by an unhealthy view of the self.

The Account

The last exercise that I will explain is similar to the previous one, but instead of focusing on the self, the writer will now focus on an event. Try and remember an important event which happened recently (good or bad). Whilst recalling the event, write it down and describe it in as much detail as possible. How did you feel about it? What role did you play in its unfolding? What effect did it have on your actions and thinking during the following days?

Now try and think about other individuals who were involved. Try imagine yourself in their shoes and proceed to answer the same questions as before. Compare your written accounts. What similarities and differences do you notice? What does this reveal about you and your way of thinking and acting?

When the writer learns to gain more control over their conscious mind they are able to take it a step further and enter in what Keats believed to be a writer's ‘trance’ (much like Morley's ‘switch’), a state wherein the body-mind, the dreaming mind and the daylight conscious mind are at work together, helping the writer produce work which he / she cannot clarify with rational conscious intelligence.

The writer eases themselves into it through a certain ‘key’, for instance, a piece of music, a phrase, a sketch, or a subject (Gooch, 1988: 1- 2; Morley, 2007: 107 - 108).

This state of active trance is also achieved within alchemy and is induced by the active meditation on a picture or mandala which helps put the process and the goal into perspective before the alchemist starts their daily experimentation. However, returning to the writer’s myths, the fear of imperfection often presents itself in another form.

Myth Four: Originality Is Essential

This fear is simply experienced as the obsessive need to be original. Writers wish to be distinctive and believe that this can only be achieved when creating tales which are unique to them; tales which set the individual’s mind apart from all others. However, to distinguish between an original product and a mere regurgitation, the writer needs to know what stories are out there and the different styles in which they have been presented.

4.1.2 Becoming a Reader:

Reading Literary Works

Unlike the previous exercises this is an exercise I had to repeat over a longer period, but similar in the fact that they should become routine. The only way to acquire this knowledge is to take a seat at the other end of the theatre both literally and figuratively. The writer must be an active reader of a wide range of genres and authors so that he may become knowledgeable about their craft and its endless possibilities.

Baker expands on this saying that the writer's technique (his unique style) is something which has to be developed, that “no dramatist has this technique as a gift at birth, nor does he require it merely by writing plays, [in fact] he reads and sees past and present plays, probably in large numbers” (Baker, 1976: 1). When reading and viewing these works, the writer picks up on their qualities and how they relate to their creators.

This does not mean that the writer should jump in full steam as a master of their own method, on the contrary, the individual must view themselves as the pupil of the many works to which they expose themselves and start by first imitating them (Baker, 1976: 2). The closer the writer gets to accurate imitations the better their knowledge on the mechanics and devices of theatre and writing becomes. As a novice writer the idea of imitation seemed somewhat sinful to me, like stealing the voice of

another even though it was just for the sake of practice. However this is actually no different to what we ourselves did as children.

Children are natural imitators who read and pick up on the mannerisms of their family members and friends. We initially learn our ways of thinking through others only to shape it later and make it our own (Haarhoff, 1998: 156). Once the individual feels ready, he is able to manipulate these devices to their own liking. One needs to or risk becoming a second hand writer of the very authors one has come to admire (Haarhoff, 1998: 156 & Baker: 1976: 1, 2, 62). Apart from drawing inspiration and knowledge from other writers there exists another endless pool elsewhere.

Reading the World

Here the writer can again equate themselves to the alchemist observing their world, observing nature and being its pupil. The egoistic writer convinces himself / herself that they have sound knowledge on the chosen topic right from the start, mainly due to having life experience, and neglects the act of neutralising their presuppositions in order to approach it objectively. Objectivity opens the individual's mind to new perspectives and helps them to relearn what he / she believed they already knew, and as writer Bronwyn Redden explains:

“It is not I who choose the story; the story chooses me. Writers imagine that they can cull stories from the world. I’m beginning to believe that vanity makes them think so. That it’s actually the other way around. Stories cull the writers from the world. Stories reveal themselves to us. The public narrative, the private narrative – they colonise us. They commission us. They insist on being told”

(Morley, 2007: 164).

The key is to slow down, to rely less on what I perceive to be my own imagination and creativity, but which is actually much bigger than I – it is a force spawning from our “common heritage”, and in alchemical terms, from the One (Haarhoff, 1998: 39). When we neglect this process we risk hitting a barrier further down the line, a scenario wherein the parallel between the writer’s intention and what is written is absent.

He knows it, he feels it, but being overly sentimental keeps him from discovering new information objectively (Bishop & Starkey, 2006: 23). To keep myself open to ideas outside myself I decided to make use of a personal journal.

4.1.3 The Writer's Journal

On a practical level, a writer's journal is a tool used to record a range of things from bits of conversation, advertising copies, lines from letters or books or plays, new words you come across in the dictionary, quotes, anything that can serve as an idea for a story or that can add to a story (Burt-Thomas, 2010: 87). On a psychological level a journal serves as a tool for self-study, as the writer lays down their ideas and emotions on the page to be examined and objectified, but also belief systems which exist outside of the writer and how they relate to it in their own lives (Barrett & Bolt, 2007: 37).

The journal proved to be invaluable. Firstly, it served as a platform for self-reflection. The blank page gave me a chance to reflect on my preconceptions of the world around me, and in the process of writing and reading them out loud I found myself challenging them. The subjective inconsistencies started to reveal themselves more and more each time I wrote and each personal entry would turn itself into a 'sweat lodge' session. I was slowly trying to rid myself of the barriers which hindered my perception of the world as well as myself.

As with my drawing exercises I reflected on past events, such as near death experiences, celebrations, places which I had visited and people I've met throughout my life. What became clear is that I was able to document them in fresh ways just by changing the focus point of the tale. As an example I refer to a near death experience I had at the age of five whilst swimming.

I learned to swim very late in my childhood and relied on water wings until a friend of my father finally taught me to make do without them. The incident occurred before then however. One afternoon my father and I were visiting a friend of his. Whilst waiting for my father to finish his conversation inside and bring me my water wings I decided to go on ahead and lie on the lilo floating in the pool. As I proceeded to lie down, the bed tipped and I ended up in the water. This experience has always been of great mystery to me due to the following reasons:

As I landed in the water I sank down to the point where I was standing at the bottom of the deep end. My vision underwater was as clear as day, without any of the usual fuzziness I experienced previous times whilst peering underwater. Though one would expect an individual to panic I was as calm as ever, in fact, I distinctly remember taking the time to observe my surroundings to such a degree that I can still remember most of what I saw.

Rays of light were dancing on the floor which was quite clean. Staring up I could see the trees to my left morphing to each little ripple on the surface, and to the right a corner of the lap. Another figure appeared later when I glanced up again, moving speedily around the edge opposite me and then around again until finally coming to a standstill next to me. Two hands burst through the liquid glass to pull me from the depths – my father.

I had been down there for longer than a minute, during which time I first observed and thereafter proceeded to ‘moon-walk’ (not the dance) to the wall on my right, trying to climb my way up the flat slippery surface. During all this my air supply never even gave the hint of nearing depletion. An event which could have had devastating effects became one in which I experienced a strange sort of peace and clarity.

Whilst recalling it, the water took on a new maternal nature to me, something which decided to cradle me at that moment and keep me calm when I should have been overcome by fear. Reflecting on these events also brought back memories I’d almost entirely forgotten, as if a gate was being opened bringing with it an entirely new life in comparison to the one which I created with my favoured recollections.

Apart from memories, my handy little pocket book helped me explore events and ideas I came into contact with whilst walking around town or after speaking to people. Jotting down quotes or key points within overheard conversations turned me into a regular ‘Harriet The Spy’, or in this case, Harry - the former being another favourite childhood movie I’d completely forgotten about until recently whilst jotting down a few notes in my journal.

In truth this was no different to my second attempt at the free-writing exercise. Possible themes and plots arose from this and I was slowly building up my arsenal. If I may quote the famous South African writer, Breyten Breytenbach, this writing helped me “cut up my environment into digestible chunks” (Haarhoff, 1998: 27).

In a way these exercises could also be regarded as acts of reading. Instead of books and plays, I am reading the world, tapping into the ‘communal spring’ of society and nature, and drawing from that the stories which beg to be told. Similar to the personal journey it is also necessary that the playwright break these potential story ideas down to their core or risk losing sight of the essence of the play the further they progress in writing it.

This has always been my bane in writing. Often I’d have a theme and story in mind and would proceed to write the draft, however, when it came to revising the said text I am unable to identify the clear thematic focus point. The story itself starts lending focus to such a variety of sub-issues that what should be the main focal point becomes lost or watered down by all the extra plot elements which distract from it.

4.1.4 Identifying Ideas

I decided to take the time and break down all the thematic and plot ideas I had accumulated over my ‘reading’ period. These themes also have the potential to act as metaphors for the creative work. The first theme which raised its head was that of cultural intergenerational conflict. Within the past year I

had often come across tales of individuals who had distanced themselves from the older members within their family due to disputes over racial tolerance, religious beliefs, heteronormativity, and even simple life goals.

The theme also arose on a more public scale with racial tensions increasing due to the Cecil John Rhodes protest at the University of Cape Town, as well as the religious criticism over the LGBT rights (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) and the legalisation of same-sex marriages in America.

On a very basic level, both these public issues demonstrated a lack of empathy by the individuals involved. The reason for this I believe (as I concluded from my reading of the circumstances) is that ego keeps us from taking a step back and planting ourselves in the shoes of another - no matter whether they are wrong by our standards or not, and more often than not it feels as though one finds that younger generations are raised on the belief that they **MUST** possess the same beliefs or risk punishment.

This ego-driven subjectivity quickly gives rise to conflict when younger generations take a stand against this 'norm'; turning differences into back and forth 'eye-for-an-eye' disputes: "You tear down our history, we tear down yours"; "you enter into a same-sex marriage, you are no longer welcome in our church or home", and so forth.

I asked an individual who openly professed his disgust towards same-sex marriages what he would do if the tides were turned, if society suddenly adopted the belief that heterosexual marriages were an 'abomination', whether or not he would follow their lead and be able to abstain from this "sinful" act.

The point was to see if individuals could live under the weight of their own rules and judgments. It came as little surprise when he deflected the question entirely, stating that this was not a societal matter but a religious one and that society had to abide by the greater laws conveyed in the Bible and thus by God.

I reflected on this answer which displayed three characteristics: First, that it served the means to redirect the argument due to the individual's inability to answer it without doing harm to their own credibility. Second, that the individual tried to ground his opinion on something which they believed to exist outside themselves, in other words, the word of a disconnected entity - this mirrors the previous point on minor myths and how people construct identities by associating with objects and groups outside themselves. And lastly, that the given answer betrayed his emotional subjectivity which meant that the individual failed in his attempt to stay rational.

One could then ask whether or not the biggest hindrance to social development is pride: The fear that our views might be wrong; our unwillingness to learn more about that which we do not understand; the fear of swimming against the stream of society for the sake of justice. This brings me back again

to Jung and Gerber's statements about the 'subtle mind' and that the only way in which an individual can free himself / herself from the personal and societal myths is to surrender the ego and to become devoid of arrogance and greed. Only when this is done can they open their minds to a broader understanding of the world (Jung, 1953: 259).

The second theme which peaked my interest was of society's relationship to technology. The question which kept raising itself was whether or not humanity is overly-dependant on technology? Is humanity truly in control of its own inventions and the greater development of technology? Is it truly a blessing or has society undergone a de-evolution masked by progress? What sparked this interest was firstly, and honestly, the invention of the selfie stick.

Seeing the advertisement in the shop window of a local cellular network provider, I couldn't help but smile. To be honest, the idea of an individual pulling out an extendable metal stick from a pocket or handbag, thrusting it out into the open, nearly poking out the eye some unfortunate passer-by whilst trying to take their own picture, just seemed an unusual concept to me. Note however that **I do** realise that this view is undeniably subjective and prejudiced. The reality is however that they sell, and they sell well. I decided to try and spot more cases of what I believed to be overdependence on technology and found the following examples:

Families stuck on their phones during dinners or lunches at restaurants; the obsession over finding the closest parking space to an entrance so to save one the extra one-hundred meter walk; the rushing of individuals to social media platforms and YouTube as a means to pass the time; the installation of electronic blinds or self-opening drawers so as not to be burdened by having to open them by hand.

These are but a few I came across, which seem trivial in comparison to the invention of the computer, the atom bomb, the plane, modern weaponry, the internet, and so forth. But their trivial, daily natures were the very elements which made them perfect. I wanted to understand how technology had embedded itself into the smallest cracks of our mentality and how it has come to govern society's thoughts and activities in comparison to the previous generations.

Another great eye-opener came during my recent time spent with two boys, eleven and twelve years of age, who I was au pairing. Even at their age they are no strangers to YouTube, the latest gaming consoles or the luxuries of uncapped home-based Wi-Fi - which entices youthful hellfire on a day it decides to take an offline nap.

Again I state that I am fully aware that I'm being prejudiced, but looking back at the time between ten and twelve I remember my after-school time being spent drawing comic strips, running around on our house's roof, climbing every possible tree within a fifty meter radius (which caused many bald patches on my grandmother's head), and amongst other things, constructing booby traps with string, tissue boxes, and rocks (which nearly cracked my own head open). Although I was not completely oblivious

to the internet, I wasn't all too familiar with it either and practically had no use for a cell phone up until the age of 14.

Like the boys I also watched television, but mostly cartoons like *Batman*, *Samurai Jack*, *Ed, Edd n Eddy*, and *Digimon*, which were far less serious and intellectual in comparison to the adult series and sport which grace the screen of the two youngsters. Even school breaks were spent battling Pokemon and Dragon Ball Z tazos or playing King of the Castle instead of sharing the latest smartphone applications, which would probably have been pixelated mobile games back then.

In essence it seems as though current times have seen a decrease in personal imagination. However, as I have said before, I am being prejudiced and I am sure my parents' generation had the same opinion of mine.

4.1.5 Researching Idea

For this reason I decided to read up on some of the views regarding society's relationship to technology and found the topic to be very controversial, which was to be expected. One of the major focus points for those in favour of technological innovation was the healthcare industry. Not only have advancements in medicine allowed us to treat once untreatable illnesses, like Scarlet Fever, Colon Cancer, Appendicitis, Tuberculosis and so forth, but within a few years' time the industry might be able to move away from medicines to a large extent by introducing nanobots into the patients' bloodstreams.

These microscopic robots would be able to treat disease, destroy bacteria, repair cells, carry oxygen and create blood clots for wounds but without the amount of side-effects caused by medicines (Govette, 2015). And if the idea of tiny robots in your body isn't a strong enough shock to the system, experts believe that the ideal of everlasting life might actually be close at hand.

However, instead of the alchemical Elixir of Life, scientists and medical experts are experimenting with cryo- and chemo-brain preservation techniques with the goal of copying the brain onto a computer or another brain. While the latter half of the process might only be realised within a few decades the Director of the Turin Advanced Neuromodulation Group, Dr Sergio Canavero, claims that the first successful head transplant will be possible within two years' time (Thielman, 2015 & Govette, 2015).

On the administrative side of the industry, hospitals are finally able to manage patient data through web-based software, or more specifically, Cloud-based electronic health records software. This allows hospitals to update patient records in real-time. It allows medical practitioners to access a patient's records from anywhere in the world through their phone, tablet, laptop or personal computer.

Individuals can finally have access to their own auto-updating records wherever they go and at any time just by logging in to the EHR app or website. An individual can finally receive test results displayed in detailed graphs and charts through this software and gain a full understanding of his/her current condition. While I do not deny that this information and subject fascinated me, something was missing; an X factor to the material.

I decided to visit the local library and gather more information about the subject and to see if it would lead to new insights and topics to explore. Through my research I was able to highlight three main elements which drive humanity's relationship with technology: simplification, empowerment and distraction.

Simplification

Within the work and living space the modern human no longer needs to calculate their daily actions on the scale at which their ancestors had to. Finances, time, appointments, routes, cooking methods, weather, and vitals are but a few in a long list of information that is available to us with the simple touch of a button. I carry with me a device which observes and analyses both the world and myself, in terms of what I might like or need, so that I don't have to - a far cry from the hermetic, alchemical, and writing practices of self-reflection and true perception.

The role of thinking has thus to a large degree been placed on technology so that the individual is given 'breathing room'. Though this might seem like an occurrence which has only manifested itself within the last 20 years due to leaps in artificial intelligence and other advances, this reality was well in place during the early years of mass production. In a range of interviews, Charles R. Walker recorded accounts of factory workers stating that their jobs had started becoming "engineered out" and that they no longer had to think through their tasks as they had done before the implementation of technological systems (Walker, 1962: 66).

This change did not come without cost, and the price to be paid according to cyber culture expert, Chris Hables Gray, was the sacrifice of our natural rhythm and the adoption of the 'machine rhythm' (Grey, 2002: 102). This reality had even been foreseen and illustrated by world famous comic actor, filmmaker and composer, Charlie Chaplin, back in 1936 in his film *Modern Times*.

In it Chaplin skilfully acts out the part of a young factory worker who struggles to keep up with the speed and temperament of the conveyer belt and a mechanical meal-feeding prototype. His inability to adapt not only gets him into trouble with his co-workers and employers, but also causes him to have a physical and psychological breakdown which leads to rebellious and impulsive protest against the inhumane system (Modern Times, 1936). The more we simplify our lives the more in control we feel and this leads to the second element.

Empowerment

"No normal person is happy with a situation which he cannot control to some extent" which is why all technological innovation is driven by humankind's need to control and change its environment, whether it be natural or societal (Walker, 1962: 100). However, as Steven L. Goldman states:

“There is an essential asymmetry between ‘change’ and ‘improve’. Every improvement necessarily implies change, but not every change implies an improvement! To make a thing or a situation better, you have to change it, but it is trivially obvious that the reverse is not the case”

(Amichai-Hamburger, 2009: 100).

Let us examine the improvement of information and communications technology (ICT) for example. In the workplace the development of ICT has improved efficiency and productivity as individuals are now able to access information from almost everywhere at any time and also engage in instant long distance communications with fellow businessmen (Verespej, 1995: 48).

Though this improves business performance overall, cases of stress-related disorders have increased within the last decade due to interactions with improved technologies and higher performance standards being set by companies (Amichai-Hamburger, 2009: 109).

The individual can no longer free themselves from work due to technology opening a 24-hour channel to work. Whereas in the past family and residence served as a shelter from work-related stress, the modern person finds themselves in a world where the boundaries between the workplace and personal life are becoming ever more blurred according to Jerome Brightman, president of Global Management Institute (GMI):

“Talk to anyone informally about e-mail and voicemail and they will tell you that they will look at the clock when they are home at 7:30 at night and say 'I think I will check my e-mail and voicemail. Then they have a dilemma: they see 10 to 15 messages and start working for another two hours”

(Verespej, 1995: 48).

Amichai-Hamburger reinforces this ever-growing reality with his statement that:

“Within this new work/life culture, the balance of interest between employer and employee will need to be renegotiated. Through the last half of the 20th century, a consensus emerged on aspects of employment such as the length of the normal working week, with working time outside of these limits being considered overtime. Expressions such as 9-to-5 reflect the widespread acceptance of this consensus, the idea of ‘24/7’ potentially threatens the consensus”

(Amichai-Hamburger, 2009: 113).

Our ability to complete objectives at any time and at a faster pace has not increased peoples' personal time as we had once hoped it would. Ironically it has left them with less time as mobile phone calls, messages and emails tie them to work on a constant basis; not to mention the fact that ignoring these notifications and channels of communication raises the risk of job loss according to Margaret Shellada, deputy general manager for Local 790A of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) (Verespej, 1995: 48). Bearing this in mind another question which needs to be raised is this: Do we truly want to escape the techno babble which drives us to the edge of sanity?

Distraction

Even with the hastened technological lifestyle, how often do people as individuals try and take a break from it by using the very technology they are trying to escape? Chatting to a friend on WhatsApp, browsing Facebook, YouTube, Instagram or Twitter, playing online games, watching television, blocking out the world with earphones whilst walking or exercising; the screen has become a digital haven even whilst surrounded by friends and family. Unfortunately as individuals people desire an escape from themselves as well.

Although social media is a great medium for communication, more often than not it becomes a platform used by individuals to create the 'ideal self' or to reveal parts of ourselves as a means of exploration according to Yair Amichai-Hamburger and Azy Barak, Professor of Psychology at Ohio State University:

“The internet supplies an environment that helps create a ‘time out’ for the individual and so it can serve as a moratorium. It seems that the protected environment created by the internet generates unique opportunities for people to explore their identity and enables them to hold varying identities simultaneously. This way, cyberspace easily allows the presentation of multiple identities, in a way that is non-existent offline. In some cases, it may even create or promote elements of therapeutic processes, resulting in more coherent and comprehensive self-identity”

(Amichai-Hamburger, 2009:39).

However, both Amichai-Hamburger and Barak do not deny the possibility of this practice to have devastating effects; an opinion which Gray expresses when he refers to the 'cyborg individual'. The term cyborg describes an enhanced individual which potentially lacks human weakness and in that sense social media is the perfect platform for the creation of the cyborg self (Gray, 2002: 90). The veneration of the cyborg and social media in modern times has lead the modern individual to believe

that he is practicing true self-reflection when they are merely distracting themselves from themselves with technology.

As mentioned previously, individuals hardly ever share information which would reveal flaws in themselves. Although humans are ‘flawed’ in many ways and should embrace it proudly, our egos prevent us from being honest with society as well as ourselves. The cyborg self is then an individual that embodies a paradoxical nature, for they are “potentially better than human *and* they threaten the loss of our identity” (Gray, 2002: 90).

What this has become is a simulacrum (a representation) of identity. Each time someone enters this virtual space they are choosing an identity in the same way that an actor chooses a costume. While many are aware that these identities are inauthentic, others come to regard them as true, or at the very least extensions of their true authentic selves.

These identities can never be authentic because they cannot feel. It is the individual who feels, not the post, the picture, or the avatar. They could perhaps try to represent the self, but they can never *be* the self in the way that it experiences the world. With so much topical information gathered and after subjecting myself to the fire of self-reflection, it was time to move on to the next stage within the Opus.

4.2 Dissolution: Immersing the Self

(For this section, refer to *Delving into the Unconscious*-addendum.) This stage constitutes the immersion in the unconscious feminine mind and the exploration of buried material influencing our conscious thoughts. As stated before, the individual must confront these dark forces in the mind so that they can break their hold on the individual and open ‘the river’ of emotion which he / she then follows and with which the practitioner energises themselves. This stage is not governed by the rational mind, it cannot be or the individual will become rigid and closed off once more to any impulses and truths arising from within themselves. The symbolism of water and submersion also lends itself to the writer’s journey.

The conscious ideas the writer has for their work can merely be considered the tip of the iceberg. The only way for the writer to get to the true depths of the idea, is to plunge into the dark waters of it and explore what lies beneath the surface, even if it means confronting uncomfortable truths and difficulties (Morley, 2007: 108). This means that the writer must place him- or herself in the midst of the idea, experience what emotions arise, what it means to the individual, and why the writer as individual is attracted to the idea:

“Incubation creates an incoming wave of the subconscious that washes over the pages you write. Let this happen; wallow in it even if it feels like a form of depressive stagnation. This is the time for disciplined idleness, and not reading. Importantly, it is not a time for talking about your project but for listening to it growing”

(Morley, 2007: 128).

As shown in Chapter 4.1, there are numerous exercises the writer can use to delve into the self, whether it is through direct confrontation or through trickery. Once the writer has delved into and confronted themselves, they can expand their search towards their story ideas and what emotional ties they have to them.

I decided that my active meditation on the idea would start by making use of my journal. This meditation would help me make sense of the greater story of techno-driven society by using the alchemical Principle of Correspondence (see section 2.5.2) to localise it within my own life (Carty, 2007: 65). My first task was determining how technology formed part of my daily lifestyle, and so I wrote down my daily activities and what type of technology each of them involved (Morley, 2007: 47). This is what came out of my journaling:

My Day

Wake up:	Waiting for cell phone alarm to go off.
Make breakfast :	Cooking with microwave and kettle.
Whilst having breakfast:	Checking emails and browsing Facebook.
Freshening up:	Shower and shave.
Work and research:	Computer, internet, cell phone.
Au Pairing:	Car, cell phone.
Preparing dinner:	Fridge, Stove, Oven, Microwave, Kettle
Have dinner:	Watching series on computer.
Relax:	Playstation, cell phone (ebook), and computer.
Going to bed:	Cell phone: setting alarm, listening to music.

I decided to try and write down alternatives to some of these activities which did not involve the use of technology. While my cooking, working and hygiene activities stayed mostly the same, except for eating more raw fruits and vegetables, my relaxation activities came under intense friendly fire. Firstly all my tablet, computer, cell phone and Playstation focus changed to reading, sketching, practicing music, writing, callisthenic training, walking, tai chi and meditation. I decided to once again do some free writing about my relationship with technology to see what feelings would arise within me.

Though I knew it, I finally realised that my day started and ended in front of my computer and that most of my personal relationships were kept alive during the year not through face to face contact, but through my use of social media sites and WhatsApp. The reality made me feel trapped. It was however not the technology that disappointed me, but the fact that I willingly allowed myself to be trapped by a lifestyle ruled by inanimate objects masquerading as living individuals.

Profile pictures became the ‘true’ faces of loved ones. Messages and ringtones became their hugs, kisses, handshakes and arms around my shoulders. Most shockingly, I had accepted them as such, without question. I recalled times being alone (this includes times being in my own company whilst in public) when I would turn to the screen of a computer or cell phone out of boredom and a fear of being excluded from the outside world. Ironically this so-called solution to exile was nothing more than me dragging myself back to a greater exile; a digital bubble which shielded me from nature,

discomfort, reality, and judgement from others. But how do I fit into the communal spring of technol led lives?

It was necessary for me as individual to determine how my individual story fit into the communal spring which reached back to The One, and to draw ideas and finally a story out of the dark pool of dissolution. I say that this was necessary, because I had to take myself back to Jung's theory of the shared unconscious (see section 2.8). This was another way for me to tap into a shared pool of emotion and to rid myself of the 'I', the ego. Haarhoff beautifully sums up the need for this step in the following passage:

"I am not a single unified writer. I create the illusion that I am so that it is easier to function in the world. But I am many people. I am community. My dreams suggest that this might be so. Perhaps psychological growth depends on the individual losing his sense of single fixed identity"

(Haarhoff, 1998: 145).

At the same time however, the individual's story also contributes to the greater story and "we create community by sharing our own individual stories" (Haarhoff, 1998: 145). I decided to make use of the alchemical practice of mandala drawing and meditating in order to capture the totality comprised of the individual and communal – to discover how I as individual and the community are linked and in turn part of the One Mind.

The term mandala means "circle" or more specifically, "magic circle" and has been used throughout many religious systems. The German Christian mystic and theologian Jakob Böhme referred to it as the "Mirror of Wisdom" and he was not the only individual who believed in the power it housed. In Lamaism, Tantric yoga and Eastern ceremonial practices the mandala has been used for centuries to aid contemplation (Jung, 1953: 91 & Jung, 1967: 22).

The mandala as a visual symbol contains spatial concepts which stimulate the creative right brain; much in the same way as the free writing exercise I had undertaken previously (Haarhoff, 1998: 61, 62 & 120). Jung goes on to explain that unlike the logical aspect of consciousness, the right brain as well as the collective unconscious does not understand the language of logical consciousness and:

"Therefore it is necessary to have the magic symbol which contains those primitive analogies that speak to the unconscious. The unconscious can be reached and expressed only by symbols, and for this reason the process of individuation can never do without the symbol. The symbol is the primitive exponent of the unconscious, but at the same time an idea that corresponds to the highest intuitions of the conscious mind"

(Jung, 1953:28).

Though the concept might seem strange, many symbols like the Christian cross, the Buddha figure, The Star of David, The All-Seeing Eye, the Pentangle even the Windows of Microsoft Windows or bitten apple of the Apple brand, represent a set of beliefs and systems. According to Haarhoff, meditating on these symbols has the potential to alter our brain waves and can act as a pre-writing warm-up in the same way for example that meditating on the Om¹⁵ in Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism reminds followers to be totally present when starting their day (Haarhoff, 1998: 120).

Many alchemists, after the initial phase of finding ideas, also meditate on a mandala or alchemical pictures such as the *Tabula Smaragdina* in order to become inspired by the work, to identify its properties, and to establish a deep connection within the chosen topic - specifically the quintessence (Hauck, 2014: 8 – 10). Drawing my mandala helped me to become impulsive and childlike in my efforts again, just as with free writing and left hand drawing exercises (see page 8 of *Doodles and Mandalas* addendum). As I mentioned previously, the mandala speaks to the irrational mind and trying to draw it from a logical viewpoint would defeat the purpose. Difficult though it was, I managed to stay impulsive.

I did not feel the need to correct any of its minor faults for fear of giving my rational mind a foothold in the experiment. Whilst drawing it however I came to a revelation about our relationship with technology. In reality it is much like certain thematic elements conveyed by the Ouroboros¹⁶ symbol, for while society may follow technology as its saving grace, it is also the very thing putting us in the position to need saving as we ‘eat ourselves’ whilst trying to stay alive and grow. Technology has thus replaced the old gods humanity created and who it was dependent on and in whose name lives were sacrificed for ‘growth’ and ‘prosperity’.

Going back to my research I found the same opinion held by Gray:

“Faith in technology as purely positive progress leads to the overly hasty conclusion that we should use ‘all the resources of science and technology,’ and if we do not, a good outcome is merely ‘lucky’. Linked to this is the common belief that technology gives us more control over our lives, even if things are already out of control precisely because of technology. Consider the driver going 80 miles per-hour in his car, which goes into a skid. He wants anti-lock brakes. They may save him, they may not, but technology got him into danger in the first place”

¹⁵ The Om symbol represents the four states of being: The waking state, deep sleep state, dreaming state and the turiya state of absolute consciousness. It is often chanted during meditation to bring about focus and awareness.

¹⁶ The serpent devouring its own tale.

(Gray, 2002: 89).

To play with this idea I decided to cut a link in the Ouroboros chain and play the ‘What If?’ game (see *What If* addendum). Writer Graeme Harper explains that the question of ‘what if?’ (the writer’s hypothesis) is what drives the very process of the writer’s creative journey (Harper, 2006: 164). The ‘what if’ exercise was also used on stage. Taught by Russian actor and theatre director, Constantin Stanislavski, the exercise was coined by him as the ‘magic if’. He believed that to understand the character and oneself in relation to the character, the actor had to transcend realism by asking what would happen ‘if’ they were caught up in the events of the story. By doing this, Stanislavski believed that the actor would be able to tap into the nature and essence of the character and thus give truth to their performance.

Once again I grabbed hold of my journal and started writing down questions as they came to me: “What if technology ceased today?” “What if we became autonomous computers, programmed to respond in specific ways to specific situations?” “What if I weren’t in control?” “What if people stopped thinking altogether?” “What if we are mere free-range animals to corporate companies?”

“What if we were slowly turning into our own geminoids¹⁷?” “What if I was the only unaffected individual in a world filled with cyborgs?” “What if we are actively reversing the Pinocchio fairytale?” Whilst writing down these questions I could not help but have the term ‘slave’ manifest in my thoughts: slaves to technology, slaves to ourselves, slaves to corporations which keep feeding us the ideas of a ‘perfect modern life’ (which is comprised of large houses, expensive phones, fuel-heavy cars, and selfie sticks) all while the earth crumbles around us.

On the other hand with the slave idea rose questions of: “What would the individual look like who did not conform to this lifestyle and who wouldn’t be afraid to embody the term ‘techno peasant’?” “What would this person look like and how would they cope if they were to work in an environment that helped build this lifestyle?” I admit that much of this inspiration came from watching Charlie Chaplin’s film *Modern Times* and seeing the hustle and bustle of modern living turn ordinary people into machines and the defiant into the forsworn. It was time to start weighing up my ideas for a play and determine which were worth pursuing and which needed to be discarded.

¹⁷ A term used by Japanese roboticist Hiroshi Ishiguro to refer to his advanced artificially intelligent robots which are mechanical clones of real people.

4.3 Separation: Isolating and Sorting Ideas.

As the subheading suggests, this the phase in the Opus during which the individual sorts through elements of themselves and decides what is worth keeping and what restrains them or has no place in the refined personality or product. It was time for me to sort through the potential ideas which I had accumulated during the calcinations and dissolution stages and to determine what was worth pursuing in the writing process, and what needed to be discarded

One of the first ideas which came to me was the setting and main action of the play. Inspired by the factory scene in Chaplin's *Modern Times* as well as the Walker interviews with the factory workers, I imagined characters constructing a machine within a factory workshop. During the construction of the machine I wanted to show how the individuals underwent various physical and emotional changes whilst they sacrifice themselves to complete the project. Supervising the process would be the foreman as the eyes and ears of the company.

The ideal would be to keep the cast as small as possible so as to have a story and environment which would be easy to manage and which could convey the theme of 'techno dependence' as simply as possible. I decided to go about playing with character creation, hoping that it might give flesh to the rough skeletal frame of the play. I wanted diversity in age, background, personality and physicality so as to show that all people are susceptible to the influence of technology and the media and that different generations influence one another in turn. I sat myself down and started mapping out characters. Out of this brainstorming session Derek (the 'newbie'), Mike (the ex-convict), Jessie (the mute) and Henry (the millionaire widower) were born (see *Character Sheets and Ideas* addendum).

All the main characters had roughly been created, apart from the foreman, a character whom I was still trying to flesh out. In truth, up until now I wasn't sure whether I wanted a human supervisor on stage or just the presence of CCTV cameras. I decided to move on, hoping that a solution might present itself later. However someone or something was missing in the cast. I recalled reading a comment from one of the Walker's interviewed factory employees regarding the assembly line. He commented on the role of the foreman saying that: "You can't fight the line. The line pushes you. We sometimes kid about it and say we don't need no foreman. That line is the foreman. Some joke" (Walker: 1962: 100).

With this statement I was brought back to the scene in *Modern Times* where the speed of the mechanical belt keeps increasing making it harder and harder for Chaplin to keep up with its pace of tightening the bolts on the transported metal plates. But comparing the line, a machine, to a foreman, sent a slight chill down my spine. In my mind I could not help but imagine a pair of mechanical eyes¹⁸

¹⁸ Metaphor: The machine entity is not dead, but not truly alive either. Like Frankenstein's monster it is an unnatural thing, which we have created and which now haunts us. Ironically, in Mary Shelley's 1818 novel,

staring down at the individual working on the line, monitoring his or her every move, calculating their performance and standing ready to ‘extract’ them as a faulty ‘part’.

Strange as the idea was, I liked it and decided to start brainstorming with the concept of a system monitoring the characters like mice in a laboratory. The aim of the workers would then be to complete the machine they were assigned to build, and the aim of the company would be to observe and test the efficiency of the employees under varying conditions. Though a rough idea was there I needed a storyline, an arch to carry the characters through from beginning to end.

I decided to make an appointment with a former lecturer of mine to discuss the idea as well as the style of the play. We both agreed that the idea of characters being changed would need to be made prominent; for instance having Jessie lose a leg and getting it replaced with a prosthesis which ends up moving on its own and correcting his natural actions, or having Henry assigned to the task of programming the machine only later to start speaking in coded language.

I wanted the story to follow Derek as the newcomer, an individual who rebels against the system and one who sees the danger it poses. This would lend more focus to the play by allowing me the opportunity of contrasting him with the others until eventually he too starts to give in to the system’s influence. Still, even after our appointment I felt as though the play lacked a plot and premise. Where would it go? What would the aim of each scene be? I was stuck, but the one fact I was sure of was that it would be foolish of me to ground this play in any strict form of realism, considering the fact that I was working with science in the form of godlike AI systems and developing ‘cyborgs’ posing as factory workers – although it is becoming an increasing reality.

Realism was then the first element to be discarded and so, in complete awareness of the paradox, I turned to YouTube to see what short films and surrealist plays had been done on the subject of technology. One of the first video clips I came across was an animation called *MAN* by Illustrator and Animator Steve Cutts (*MAN*, 2012). In the video a single man lands on earth and is shown walking along killing everything in his path and covering the earth in waste as technology and civilisation grows around him. After the earth has been completely destroyed by the man and his modern lifestyle the animated character plants a flag on a massive rubbish heap amidst a polluted world, proclaiming it conquered. The following are images taken from the video:

Frankenstein, Victor Frankenstein turned his attention away from his alchemical research to study life sciences and alternative methods to re-animate corpses.



Fig.12 (Cutts, 2012)



Fig.13 (Cutts, 2012)



Fig.14 (Cutts, 2012)



Fig.15 (Cutts, 2012)



Fig.16 (Cutts, 2012)



Fig.15 (Cutts, 2012)



Fig.18 (Cutts, 2012)



Fig.19 (Cutts, 2012)

The video was an interesting and certainly critical artistic representation of human nature and what humanity is doing to the environment in the name of modernisation and development and is brilliantly illustrated by Cutts. For this reason I decided to browse the internet for some more of his work and came across the following illustrations:



Fig. 20: (Cutts, 2015)



Fig. 21: (Cutts, 2015)



Fig. 22: (Cutts, 2014)

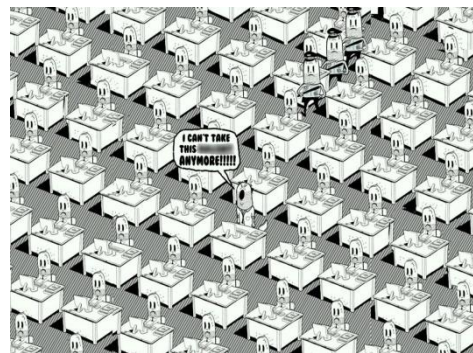


Fig. 23: (Cutts, 2012)



Fig. 24: (Cutts, 2015)



Fig. 25: (Cutts, 2014)



Fig. 26: (Cutts, 2015)



Fig. 27: (Cutts, 2014)

To call these illustrations cringe worthy would be an understatement and I felt myself identifying with the consumerist attitude displayed in most of them. Another theme which was easy to pick up, also whilst keeping *MAN* in mind, was Cutt's message that 'humans, regardless of the extent of technological progress, were in control of it all'. If this was truly the case it would be possible to 'turn off the system' of development and re-evaluate its implementation in our current age. However, as history has proven time and again, the chances of this happening are slim, especially considering that fear of the loss of illusionary control keeps driving many to believe in technology as a saviour from death and discomfort.

Ironically then, and without modern individual becoming aware of it, science and religion have once again merged. But unlike the conscious merge which saw each assist the other, the modern human being has shunned its old gods only to have unconsciously replaced it with a new god. They claim their beliefs are purely grounded in science, but like the practitioners of ancient religions the modern human too sacrifices itself for technology.

The individual puts both their health and finances at risk trying to acquire the latest and greatest inventions on the market. They neglect family in the pursuit of these objects and systems and use them as a means of bribery and distraction to keep their family from shunning them. Though the idea of the four characters in the workshop could possibly have worked, I decided to discard the story and focus on one which would convey the theme of 'techno religion' more clearly.

I admit that this felt like a step backwards, although there is nothing wrong with reassessing the topic and story. As I stated in the introduction as well as in chapter 3, both writing and alchemy are processes of experimentation. Though I did not truly realise it at first, the reality of it now truly dawned on me; I would most likely be moving back and forth between the 7 steps of the Opus (as the planning and writing of the play) quite regularly before I reached the time final product.

Technotology

I decided to briefly return to the Dissolution stage, specifically the practice of topic meditation via the mandala. However, this time my mandala would not be a drawn picture but music. After listening to a range of songs by artists and groups whose works touch on science and politics, I singled out two specific songs which I felt address the theme of techno religion most effectively. The first is by the industrial metal band *The Kovenant* and expresses their belief of how easily individuals are influenced by the ‘techno messiah’ through television. The following passages are the first five stanzas of the song:

NEON

By
The Kovenant

“Bastard proclamations of a dying nation
Social deconstruction through deceit and deception
Hit us with your pointing stick, golden arches crucifix
We will never be like you

Subliminal derangement of the human senses
Corporate illusions of holy intervention
Vulture culture history, television ministry
We will never be like you

Let me be your neon god
We've got brand new illusions for your plastic souls
We're all wired up and ready to go
Because gravity means nothing, now

A man made messiah of concrete and steel
Instant salvation through your TV screen
Let me be your god

Subdue your maker, subdue your maker
I am the giver and I am the taker
Subdue your maker, subdue your maker
All succumb to me.”

The second song is by the Alternative metal band *System of A Down*. The song identifies both possibilities of growth and annihilation but states that these outcomes can only be determined by how we approach scientific development. According to the song, science is amoral and it is up to us as a collective society to guide it, using a moral framework or risk having it and having ourselves destroy the world and one-another by having blind faith in it:

SCIENCE

By

System of A Down

“Making two possibilities a reality
Predicting the future of things we all know
Fighting off the diseased programming
Of centuries, centuries, centuries, centuries

Science fails to recognize the single most
Potent element of human existence
Letting the reigns go to the unfolding
Is faith, faith, faith, faith

Science has failed our world
Science has failed our Mother Earth

Spirit moves through all things
Spirit moves through all things”

As stated before, probably most religious individuals are born into the religions they practice. If the conscious moral governing of technology is the answer to the dilemma of indoctrination into the new tech religion (Technotology, as I will refer to it from this point on) it is important that one tries to determine how the indoctrination takes place from birth to adulthood. To do so requires a return to the previous two phases of the Opus.

Within the Calcination phase I would have to do further research on the topic of technology: new technologies, controversial streams of technology and technology addiction. Within the Dissolution stage I would again have to draw a relation to the new information and myself. Though this might be a setback, what this return to the three phases could prevent is a possible confrontation with writer's block later in the experiment. I have often been told that the issue of writer's block is in most cases not due to a lack of creativity but due to a lack of information. Thus for the good of the experiment and for my own piece of mind I will again submit myself to Calcination, Dissolution and again Separation.

4.4 Calcination, Dissolution, and Separation

4.4.1 Techno Foetus

Again using the Principle of Correspondence (see section 2.5.1) I took my journey into Technotology. It should be noted that I employed Calcination and Dissolution (research, submersion and relation) interchangeably during this phase of the experiment as I now had a topic to work with and merely needed to gain a better understanding of its relation to the world and myself. I felt that the need to repeat the steps individually and each in their own time would take too long and kill my need to want to start writing and tell my story. I decided that I good place to start would be at birth, which could be regarded as my first contact with science and technology.

Being born through a caesarean section I guess I could regard myself a cyborg baby when judging the pregnancy and labour procedures according to the views of medical /culture anthropologist Robbie Davis-Floyd:

“If all of that is done with love, maybe cyborg babies will experience themselves as both uniquely created and uniquely loved. But what I see in doctor’s offices and hospitals isn’t that. As we make our babies cyborg throughout pregnancy and birth, no one asks how they feel about the high-pitched ultrasound waves they hear, about the invasion of the amniocentesis needle, about electrodes being screwed into their scalp during labour, about losing the amniotic fluid that cushions them from the contractions when the sac is ruptured by some MD in a hurry. What price must our babies pay so that we can have information? What happened to Mystery and Trust, and Acceptance of What Is? Now that we control almost everything about who and what we reproduce, to choose not to exercise that control begins to look like negligence. So, wanting to be safe, responsible parents, we opt for the technology and control”

(Davis-Floyd, 2014).

Though there might be some truth to the theory of foetus and baby traumatising through these procedures, my medical knowledge is not developed to the degree that I have any right to argue with or against the views of the experts in the field. What did pique my curiosity however was the aspect of ‘womb intrusion’ by means of ultrasound and how parents relate to the image being displayed on screen. With scientists already working on designer baby technology what does that say about us as a society? Granted that this technology would be able to prevent any genetically hereditary diseases one can ask whether or not we have the right to tamper with nature in this way.

One could argue that alchemy in turn is also humanity’s way of tampering with nature, which I believe to be true, and so we see that the focus needs to be placed on the practitioner rather than on

the method. Like the puffers, many individuals will misuse this technology to fill their pockets and to create a new threshold of perfection, which the average person couldn't possibly afford to live up to - to be free of natural flaws. To be perfect.

With the media already plaguing society with illustrations of 'perfect' individuals and the technologies which help cultivate this 'perfection' it isn't hard to believe that these expectations are becoming forced upon unborn fetuses without their permission or opinions on the matter. Could technologies like ultrasound be contributing to this dilemma? According to Gray ultrasound establishes the thought of 'personhood' on the foetus and as a result parents already start creating imaginary profiles in their minds about the child which has yet to see the light of day:

"This means that the ultrasound machine not only represents the child, it helps make a child of a foetus, something that use to happen at birth. Although the communication system is quite limited, it is interesting that a machine that shows a representative image – a sort of shadow – becomes the symbol for the child and to some degree, the family interacts with that machine as though it were the child"

(Gray, 2002: 92).

The idea of the foetus as child as we know is a very controversial issue, but there is no denying that possible dangers arise when families bond with this digital child symbol as person only to have the actual child be born sick or falling short of their expectations. However, even with individuals becoming proud parents of the perfectly healthy children another modern issue rears its head.

4.4.2 Tech Neglect: The Machine Parent

Going back to the written work that manifested out of my memory exercise (about the room and my old childhood home) I recalled that it was whilst residing in that very house that I was given my first desktop computer and cell phone. Having no immediate friends in the area and with my father being at his office during the day and then working as a radio presenter from 21:00 to 00:00 in the evenings, I spent a lot of my time alone at home. My father bought me my first computer at the age of seven, which I used to keep myself entertained (playing games) whilst he was at work.

At the age of five I already had a television and a video player installed on my bedroom wall across from my bed and he would frequently take me to the video store to rent movies for me to watch during the week and over weekends. Though this account might sound like an individual flaunting a privileged childhood, what I'm trying and tried to prove whilst recalling it is the means to which technology gets implemented within young lives. Without laying blame on parents, Technology and science has become the techno parent for those pre-occupied with work, under financial pressure or

time constraints, or chasing social status. Though many might not wish believe it, the result of this parental shortcut has become tech addiction.

According to the Northampton Herald and Post, research had been conducted at Birmingham University on 300 parents, all with babies under the age of three. They were asked about their children's usage of Ipad and other touchscreen devices and recorded that most parents allowed their children to play on these devices for at least 30 minutes a day. According to the article this tendency has lead not only to tech addiction, but also the mastering of these devices by children before they have even learned to master language (Techno babies are they a parenting problem or are people suffering from technophobia, 2014).

While continuing my process months later, I came across an article in a local magazine supporting the 'techno child' lifestyle. In an article titled *That'll Keep You Busy!* Samantha Luiz, a writer for *You Magazine*, discusses "boredom-busting apps [that] will make your kids' holiday journey fly by" (Luiz, 2015: 24 - 25). Within the first stanza of the article she describes long distant journeys with children as a "nightmare" consisting purely of "whining and backseat bickering" (Luiz, 2015: 24).

While I do not argue that a long distance car journey will leave the young ones annoyed and bored, this is a clear example of the media marketing and praising technology's ability to tame labelled 'undisciplined' and 'uncontrollable' children. As a bonus this saves the parent of having to communicate with their child through conversation or plain fun road trip games, such as I Spy or charades. This permitted access to computers and the internet also gives the child easy access to social media, a platform which has become an addiction for the young and old alike.

4.4.3 Techno Selves: Social Media Identities

In most cases the draw to social media is due to curiosity and the illusion that they are connecting with current and reconnecting with past friends. By doing so many feel that they are solidifying their place within society and most importantly their close communal sphere. As discussed previously during the Calcination stage, social media becomes the ideal platform for the individual to explore their identity. For a child faced with the pressures of learning about their world, their place in it, and whilst having to keep up and conform to the latest and greatest trends, these platforms can be therapeutic and help suspend time in their modern fast paced world (Amichai-Hamburger, 2009:39).

Keeping up with these trends and social pressures also has the potential to encourage the need for the individual, young or old, to become more; a being greater than the average human and one which not only visually perfect and psychologically stable, but one who is able to communicate flawlessly and attractively. This is however an impossible task and so we start to withhold information about

ourselves on these social media sites and lock it away in our own minds until we suppress it enough to consciously forget about it completely (Gray, 2002: 90).

These newly created identities, though they might seem attractive, become cages which house the suppressed and true selves. These selves scratch and pound against the walls of the conscious mind and present themselves as illusions and demons within the ‘real world’ (see section 2.8.2. pg. 33). This is however not the end of the Technological rat race and so we move on to financial and work pressures.

4.4.4 Corporate Asset: The Human Cog

According to HR Systems Industry Specialist Rob Bothma it has become common practice for businesses to refer to their employees as ‘assets’. In fact “this has become a de facto statement by many companies when trying to express how much they ‘value’ their employees” (Bothma, 2013). Bothma placed specific focus on the term asset and after looking up the term ‘asset’ in several dictionaries came across the following descriptions:

- “A useful or valuable quality, person or thing; an advantage or resource: proved herself an asset to the company
- A valuable **item** that is **owned**;
- A spy working in his or her own country and controlled by the enemy; and
- Anything of **material value** or **usefulness** that is owned by a person or company”

(Bothma, 2013).

The bold terms do not succeed in inspiring confidence in the term ‘asset’ but does help explain why it has become appropriate and legal for these individuals to be on 24-hour standby. In a way the corporation becomes the All-seeing Eye constantly keeping watch over the asset; the slaver keeping individual on high-alert even when they are ‘alone’.

4.4.5 Techno Isolation: Hiding In Plain Sight

This point draws on the practice of entering into the virtual world through the many devices we own and carry – our digital appendages. Again I point to an image shown previously and one which effectively conveys the practice of modern social withdrawal.



Fig. 28: (Cutts, 2014)

Though some might believe in the illusion of privacy, what many are merely doing is stopping themselves from learning and honing the skills to communicate face to face with individuals around them. One could argue that we have become so trapped in digital communication what many have unlearned the ability to step away from the ‘online’ status. In a way the ‘uniqueness’ of our social media profiles, customised desktops or cell phone set-ups are in reality nothing more than an act of conforming and joining the hordes of individuals closing themselves off to their natural surroundings and being fully conscious in the present. It was time to consciously sort through the information and materials which I had gathered.

4.4.6 Separation

My first point of focus was on medical research and theories. Although the subjects of nanotechnology, advanced prosthetics, and obesity due to overdependence truly are fascinating technological topics, I desired to work with information which highlighted the psychological reality of the modern person; something which would be more relatable than having tiny robots swimming within your body.

The ultrasound child, the reality of tech neglect, the psychology behind identity, and social media seemed better choices due to that fact that these are subjects and activities which the modern human encounters and engages in on a regular basis. Even as you are reading this the chances are you have probably logged into a social media website or one of a thousand messaging applications within the last hour, and that’s the aim - to build on what the individual is used to seeing and doing.

I could take it a step further by placing focus on ‘techno isolation’ (hiding in plain sight) and perhaps even reveal the audience to itself through recorded footage. I liked the idea of multiple personalities and perhaps of contrasting the online personality with the live individual on stage. The potential also existed to turn the physical individual into a shadow of its real self or even robotic. The latter would

help me with convey the idea of a human asset - an individual who becomes no more than a cog in a larger capitalistic system.

To tie to the idea of systems I thought again about the alchemical research, specifically how science and esoteric beliefs became separated. The idea of the machine god greatly drew my interest. Any religion carries with it an array of metaphors, pros and cons, one of which is indoctrination. In this aspect Technotology is no different. Societies are bombarded everyday but the latest and greatest technology, to the point where it almost seems like we are being preached into a new faith.

This could create conflict for the main character. ‘What if’ the main character did not conform? What if the main character was shunned like a leper because he did not worship technology and techno dependence? This would provide me with the opportunity to criticise a different form of discrimination - the discrimination of the ‘techno peasant’.

Lastly, I thought of the system and of the idea that we are technically still in control - a reality which dawned on me when I read the lyrics by *The Kovenant*. ‘What If’ the main character were to turn off the system or push the reset button? What if they were presented with the opportunity; would they shut it down?

Armed with these ideas I could finally start experimenting with a story and with characters. Naturally the product would be refined later, but this didn’t pose a problem. Whilst Separation might be a stage of filtration it certainly isn’t the only one and the alchemist seeks to purify their materials as much as possible throughout the work just as the writer works and reworks their text. It was finally time to move on to the Conjunction phase.

4.5. Conjunction: Preparing and Drafting

Governed by the earth element, this stage nurses the material being experimented on by the alchemist and is characterised by the combination of all of the masculine and feminine, rational and emotional elements kept by the individual after the Separation stage. To the writer this is the point where they reach desired relationship with the materials of the play; one which is not overly subjective or objective, but just balanced enough to keep the individual focused and motivated to craft the Lesser Stone.

This stage corresponds to what one can call the planning and drafting phase of the writing process and is characterised by drafting of a synopsis, scenario and finally a rough play for evaluation. According to Gooch the synopsis and scenario can be both beneficial and dangerous to the writing process. The writer benefits from this by seeing notes and freeing mental space so that the choices can become clearer to them. On the other hand the rough ‘solidification’ of the idea and the play has the danger of closing the writer and the play off to spontaneity (Gooch, 1988: 33). I proceeded to gather my separated materials and started my planning.

Whilst starting my process, bearing in mind that the play was not going to be set in realism, and after researching surrealistic and expressionistic theatre, I became inspired by the idea of a physical theatre format. The reason for this was due to the observation and personal experience that it is becoming more and more difficult for individuals to express themselves and communicate without the use of phones, computers, televisions, audio-books and even bombs and guns (when we feel the need to voice our outrage in a more physical manner). Emojis have become the ideal language and means for expressing sarcasm, love, and sadness, even dread. If a person is not communicating from behind or via a screen or gun, they feel vulnerable, weak, and marginalised.

Again I acknowledge that these views are subjective and it can be open to question. As stated in the introduction to this paper, this is not a project can be built upon objectivity alone, and through this research I hope to discover subconscious realities within myself and to gain more confidence in my writing, even if my views are questionable. I do however feel that my research has proven that I am not alone in my beliefs about mankind and technology and therefore have enough reason to address what I believe to be societal issues.

By writing a play which contained no spoken dialogue by performers, and by having them be limited to ineffective bodily expressions and technology, I wished to show to the audience and the reader how ‘mute’ and expressively stunted society has made itself through its overdependence on a wide variety of devices and gadgets. Though I looked forward to the process of writing the play, I knew that

removing all dialogue would be extremely difficult. Firstly due to the fact this was something which I had never done before, but also because it's a type of script which I had never seen before.

My first solution to this problem was to search for physical theatre scripts. Unfortunately I did not find much and those which I did discover upon required a fee to view. Generally physical theatre directors don't write scripts for their plays due to the fact that it experiment with movement on stage and create as they go along. As one would guess, this was not the start I had hoped for in my Conjunction phase.

I resorted to looking for animation and silent movie scripts. Ironically my searches lead me to the script for Disney's *Wall-E*, a film which follows the tale of a Waste Allocating and Load Lifting Earth-class robot. In the film he is the last of his kind on the planet and has spent 700 years cleaning up a polluted earth which has been abandoned by the human race.

Wall-E however, like his human creators, is self-aware and able to feel emotion as well as exercise free will. At the end of the film, after following a fellow robot to a space station housing the whole of humanity, Wall-E is confronted by a society which has become morbidly obese due to their over reliance on the ship's automated systems for their every need.

Within the comfort of their hover chairs they have instant access to the internet, music and video call technology. Hovering by their sides are small droids which bring them any pureed food of their choosing to be drunk out of slushy cups. All of this is available to them at the mere touch of a button. The following image has been taken from the film and we see the filmmakers satirising the degree of laziness which many modern men and women are adopting at an alarming rate. What one sees here gives the impression of overgrown babies sucking on their milk bottles.

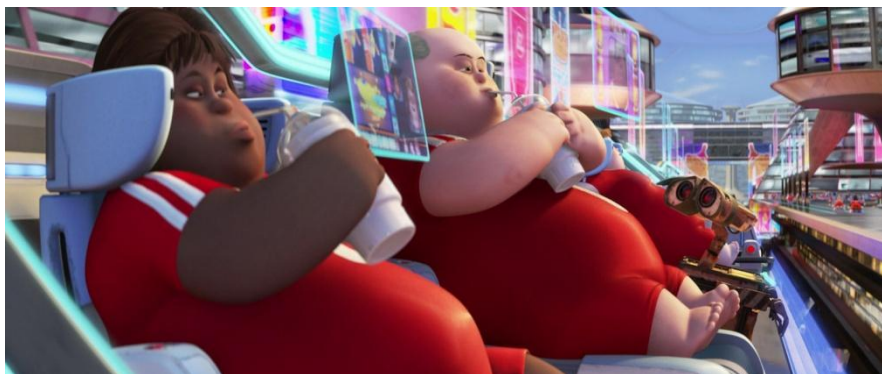


Fig. 29 (Wall-E, 2008)

This visual served as great inspiration for the script; however my true focus was on its format. Included below is an extract from the *Wall-E* screenplay:

"ON TRASH HEAP HORIZON

'...And we won't come back until we've kissed a girl -'

He places the hubcap in his compactor.
Presses a button on his chest.
The song stops playing.
The end of a work day.

Wall-E attaches a lunch cooler to his back.
Whistles for his pet COCKROACH.
The insect hops on his shoulder.
They motor down from the top of a GIANT TRASH TOWER.

EXT. AVENUES OF TRASH - DUSK

Wall-E travels alone.
Traverses miles of desolate waste.
Oblivious to roving storms of toxic weather.

Passes haunting structures buried within the trash.
Buildings, highways, entire cities...
Everything branded with the SAME COMPANY LOGO.
'Buy N Large'
'BNL' stores, restaurants, banks...transportation!
The corporation ran every aspect of life.
There's even a BNL LOGO on Wall-E's chest plate.

CLOSE ON NEWSPAPER Wall-E drives over.
Headline: 'TOO MUCH TRASH!! Earth Covered!!'
The deck: 'BNL CEO Declares Global Emergency!'
A photo of the BNL CEO giving a weak smile."

One of the first noticeable aspects of the script was that the descriptions were kept as short as possible (some even using incomplete sentences) in order to make the actions as clear as possible. This also makes it easier to read as the reader does not have to struggle through long, tedious paragraphs in order to make sense of what is taking place. I now had an idea what the style of the script would look like, but in truth the play leaned more towards a post-dramatic style of performance.

Whilst the text serves as a guideline, ultimately the play itself will be realised through experimentation on the part of the performers. Unlike most text-driven plays, post-dramatic theatre does not place its focus as strongly on ending, dialogue, complete characters, or plot. Instead, what it does is challenges the modernist focus on 'rules', completed stories, and singular metanarratives. It

tries to show that our world is made up of unfinished stories and that each contains numerous perspectives. Because it is not so strongly focused on text, post-modernism is always evolving with each new global topic (Scott, 2011: 44).

As I stated earlier, the style does not place much focus on character either, but instead on the relationship between the performer and the audience. The performer becomes a theme, an idea, and a bearer of text, rather than a complete character. Because the audience is not being presented with a complete story or fleshed-out characters they are incorporated more into the meaning-making process. It isn't about interpreting story, but rather about the shared experience between the performer and the audience-member and how they fit into the created phenomena and global topic.

In the case of *Techmata*, this phenomenon would be the transition from human into cyborg. Within this post-dramatic style, Adam does not stand out as a character, but is able to adopt the themes of mortal insecurity and interconnectedness, as opposed to the priest's themes of technological enslavement and indoctrination. Even though the text is written, it remains experimental; similar to that of a score. Actions, characters and designs can be changed as the performers see fit to suit the times. Even so I decided to start drafting a synopsis to evaluate the set-up of the ideas I currently had.

4.5.2 Synopsis

The synopsis included the title, identification of the protagonist, the main conflict, and the rough outline for the play from its beginning through the build-up, climax and finally the resolution. Apart from this I might add that during the drafting of my synopsis I realised that although I had a basic character outline for the protagonist, Adam, I desired a character that could be an 'everyman' for all those who had undertaken the journey through techno peasantry.

As his name suggests, I wanted the character, Adam, to represent the first of many who had undergone and are still undergoing this religious transformation process and who are continuously 'made' to be the perfect Technological individuals / disciples. In order to achieve the 'everyman' status I needed a character which wasn't too defined or dynamic and who as a protagonist didn't necessarily conform to the hero-type character. This would allow more room for the audience to project themselves into the character without being confronted with clashing personality traits. The following page contains the rough synopsis of the play (also see page 4 of *Techmata Planning and Revision* addendum):

Techmata Synopsis

Techmata follows the life of Adam, the protagonist, from birth to adulthood. The timeframe is set roughly between 1995 to the present. Although this specific time frame is not crucial to the story, it would benefit the play having the time frame stretch between times corresponding to the establishment of Facebook and smartphones. It is a physical theatre production which is absent of any physical dialogue. Instead all the dialogue will solely be recorded and spoken through machines as they interact with the characters on stage.

Adam is born into a society which has become overly dependent and preoccupied with technology in all its forms; from communication, mass production, entertainment and medical. Growing up, Adam has to cope with societal expectations which pressure him to conform to the technological driven lifestyle so freely embraced by those around him. This never minded embrace of technology however has led to the cultivation of a society wherein individuals have become emotionally and physically cut off from one-another - just like machines. Unlike Adam, there is no desire for individuals to communicate with their fellow humans without the help of technology.

As the play opens we see a visual representation of Adam on an ultrasound screen. Adam is born into a family which, even during his birth, is more interested in the 'ideal' child on screen than the physical person alive and well in their presence. Each new scene displays different stages in Adam's life and as he grows up we see him contending with technology for his parents' attention.

As the years go by Adam starts school and faces a group of individuals drawn to the glamour of social media. They relish the freedom of having multiple identities while being unconsciously trapped behind their smartphones and tablets. Adam tries to establish himself in this domain, but his desire for personal and emotional contact with others betrays him as a 'techno peasant' and he faces the reality of the status not only at home, but within each environment and with everyone he comes into contact with.

Finally Adam enters adulthood and a work domain dominated by greedy corporations. He soon discovers that as an employee his status is limited to that of 'asset', an object to be possessed and controlled in whatever manner the corporation sees fit. It does not take long for Adam to realize his limitations as a human when he is unable to keep up with the demands of the company's mechanical system and suffers a physical and emotional breakdown. As a faulty 'asset' Adam is considered nothing more than a corporate lab rat and joins others who are being studied. They are kept in isolation and their 'defects' studied so as to determine the effective means of converting them to 'Technotology', the new-age technological religion.

When he is finally deemed fit for work again Adam re-joins the workforce, but as a changed person - one void of emotion or the capability for intimate communication. As a newly 'saved' individual within this technologic religion he and other employees are introduced the techno congregation with a mass like ritual to celebrate both their initiation and to praise the god of science and technology. However, during the ritual something goes wrong and Adam becomes self-aware once more. He discovers that he truly does not belong in this restricted world. Aware of his awakening, the congregation turns on him, leaving Adam to flee. During his attempted escape Adam discovers an 'off' switch and shuts down the system. He is now alone in a world disconnected from the technological system, but freed as a human being.

-oOo-

With the synopsis drafted, next in line would be the drafting of a scenario, which is a detailed outline of each scene, its actions, dialogue, and atmosphere. I decided to postpone the scenario and first undertake a different and more creative exercise. I felt the need to draw up a rough sketch of the set which could inspire some events within the story and so that I can have a created space within my mind's eye for the play to take shape in (see page 4 of *Doodles and Mandalas* addendum).

Keeping with the idea of a religious system I did not want the conventional proscenium stage where the performance space and the audience were completely separated. If anything I wanted the space to give the audience the impression that they were a congregation gathering in a place of worship. I realised that a conventional theatre might not be the ideal space to perform the play and decided that the ideal space would probably be one made up entirely of cold concrete and steel, like a small warehouse or hall.

The audience would be able to sit on two sides of the performance space, facing one another. Ascending benches would have them looking down on the space and the actors, and take on the role of gods looking down at the unfolding events. Though I was working with a 'religious space' I did not want the space to be modelled on any one pre-existing religion and decided to incorporate structures and designs from various types of temples and places of worship so as to keep the space as dynamic as possible.

A few meters away from the centre of the performance area (towards the entrance) I wanted a sacrificial pit or altar which would be used to highlight more unforgiving and violent practices of the religion. At the other end I imagined a preaching pedestal in front of cathedral-like interior which stretched high above the performing space and would frame a large projector screen. On the sides of the cathedral I desired two plasma or LCD screens which could be used for secondary displays. The idea of secondary displays had me curious to what might happen if footage of audience members on their phones or gadgets could be filmed while they were inside the foyer or on the benches waiting for the play to start. This footage could later be played back to them in order to justify the fact that even they are part of this represented world. With a basic performance space in mind, and though I am aware that many writers would not agree with my decision, I decided not to draft a scenario of the play.

As I explained earlier, a scenario is a detailed planning of each scene, its characters, actions, story arc, atmosphere and design. I mentioned before that one of the dangers to the drafting of a synopsis and scenario is the limiting of spontaneity and discovery during the writing process. For this reason I felt

that it would be best to delve into the writing phase being just prepared enough to know in which direction the story was heading, but still ignorant enough to become motivated, curious, and be open to newly inspired ideas, actions, conflict, characters, atmosphere and setting. Generally I felt comfortable with this approach as it was no different to how physical theatre directors usually worked - starting with an idea and experimenting within the space (Drama Works, 2017 & Scott, 2011: 44). The only difference was that my space was a clean page. It was time to sit myself down and to start exploring the play – to forge the Lesser Stone.

4.5.3 Drafting Techmata

Scene One: Labour and Birth

Sticking to the synopsis and in order to get the sense of Adam as a human being at the start of a long journey I started with the labour scene. To symbolise the danger of death's presence during birth, I started the scene with Adam's mother lying in the sacrificial pit; a space which not only houses death, but which is also believed to ensure blessings of life and fortune from the gods. In other words, the blood of one feeds new life and new blood into the collective.

I desired for this image of physical life / blood life to be juxtaposed to an artificial or digital life being displayed on screen. This would be done by displaying an ultrasound image of the baby in her womb. Not only would this serve as juxtaposition but would also bring up the question of 'womb intrusion' as discussed by Robbie Davis-Floyd, which I mentioned earlier as part of the 'techno foetus' subsection. I wanted the mother facing the large screen to be completely fascinated with its footage. This vector created between the mother and the digital baby would in turn raise the topic of parent-to-foetus relationships. Her absolute fascination showed the birth of an expectation which might not be fulfilled.

I needed other characters present; people to fuss over the idea of a new birth. Most have experienced the fuss made over babies and parents-to-be. I desired to have these individuals drawn to this image as well. Though I do not think it is a bad cultural practice, I do believe that it has the danger to add to the cultivation of unrealistic expectations, especially after seeing the child on-screen.

The background sound of the heartbeat was used as another means to juxtapose the living child in her womb with the 'ideal' being on-screen, whilst the latter is drawing all the parents' attention. This fixated attention carries on even during the techno-birth; with the image remain exactly the same. I hoped that this would draw attention to the first of the many acts of tech neglect and how it is impossible for a child to live up to expectations created by the machine. With the blood of birth being spilled within the pit and the child being brought into this cold world, I desired to raise two questions:

Whether or not the sacrifice was worth it and whether the child was better off not existing if it would automatically be considered incomplete and imperfect coming into this world? This corresponds with the belief in many religions that people are born in sin, imperfect and in need of purification.

To emphasise this idea of purification I desired the presence of a holy figure, but one which could take on several forms, as Technotology isn't only preached in selected fields but in several. It is for this reason that I had the doctor put on the priestly robes and bless the child in the name of Technotology. The symbol drawn by him in the air as well as the symbol being displayed on the screen is the universal "ON" symbol. By blessing the child with the gesture and displaying the symbol on the screen, equates it to a machine being turned on for the first time.

I had the $\frac{3}{4}$ circle of the symbol disappear to show only the single line. The single line represents 'on' whereas the circle represents 'off'. Together they represent a state of being in 'stand-by'. The role of the priest was to be the mediator between the follower and the higher power, but to make the religion seem real enough I desired the essence of this higher power within the scene. It was for this reason that I included the mechanical face being displayed on the screen and looking down at the child. The face served as a representation for the scientific and technological systems governing societies - the invisible entity we give praise to whenever we use and abuse these devices. In turn it also shows the people behind the system, using it to govern their own.

Second Scene: Machine Parent

The biggest problem I had with the scene was drawing out the parent entity from within the machine. Though I previously discussed the reality of children, as young as the age of three, mastering technology and embracing it as a solution to boredom, pain, isolation, and neglect, I wished to show what gives birth to this childlike trust in the machine parent. Merely showing a child on a phone would not make a strong enough impact visually as this has become a daily sight within our society.

I decided that it would yield a greater impact keeping the child younger than three and bound to a bassinet or crib whilst interacting with technology. The reason for this was to show that this interaction isn't always consciously pursued by the child but that the child is put in a position where it is allowed to interact with the machine parent instead of the biological parent. With regards to the 'machine as living entity' concept I needed a device which could not be ignored and one which could represent both humanity and machine.

The logical solution to this was the use of the projector screen. As an object it is a piece of technology which is meant to draw our attention through large visual displays; that is its primary function. Indirectly the screen becomes a haven for an infinite amount of places, faces and beings which are

displayed on it. These beings draw our attention in such a way that they become real to us (in the same way the ultrasound image becomes the child) and we soon forget about the projector, the screen and their functions.

Still, I desired for it to embody a parental entity and thus decided on the angel. As loving parent she picks Adam up and draws him into the screen as an active display of how the two worlds are one to a child. This use of the angel was inspired by the Blue Fairy in *Pinocchio*. Ironically, whereas *Pinocchio* desires to become a real boy and has his dream realised, Adam reverses the tale by revealing a society which is pushed more and more into the digital world and the ideology of becoming mechanical.

Third Scene: Childhood Fun

We have all broken some digital or mechanical device in our home, whether it be dropping a phone, television remote, accidentally placing metal in a microwave or blowing the motor in a vacuum cleaner, bumping over a television, or even exposing your computer to harmful viruses; at least I certainly have had a few of these sort of accidents. Children are usually more prone to this as they do not always realise the dangers of playing inside a house when expensive electronic devices are out in the open.

Bearing this in mind, I asked myself the question: what would the consequence be if Adam broke a device in a home riddled with tech neglect (in this case being his parents' preoccupation with their devices at the cost of Adam's development). This raises the questions of whether it is fair or not to punish a child for being human and whether the piece of technology is worth potentially altering a child's personality negatively by means of unnecessary punishment.

It is true that as individuals we are more likely to lose our temper when our belongings are damaged, especially if we paid for them out of our own pockets. However, it is also true that accidents happen, to all of us, and that when they do we would wish for someone to show us some degree of mercy - a presence of Lunar (mercury) to balance the fire of Son (sulphur).

Within the third scene I wanted to show Adam as a child playing and enjoying the carefree life we all desire. I attempted to place him within an environment which technically should be home to him, but which is also a minefield of 'idolised' technological equipment; a shrine to the various demigods within the Technotology religion. What happens when the naïve 'sinner' unknowingly clashes with the techno world and angers both its followers and deities? Many would argue that history and current global events might serve as proof that we would gladly watch our fellow humans suffer at the stake for offending our beliefs or even just having beliefs of their own, even when they aren't intended to offend others. Though the text doesn't spell it out, I wanted it to raise broader question to the audience

of whether or not people derive some demented pleasure from watching the suffering; be it by our own hands or just by standing on the side-lines¹⁹.

I wanted Adam totally immersed in his game, showing the child imagination at work and how it feeds off of the daily surroundings which adults so often take for granted. Here my inspiration came from the two boys to whom I was au pair. They are passionate football supporters and would often compete with one another in imaginary Premier League matches in their backyard.

Sticking to the shrine metaphor I decided to present technology in the form of totems / statues placed around the space which was now Adam's field. Their purpose: To proclaim the presence and importance of technology within our personal space and to be the silent 'watchers' and controllers of how we act in this space (Gray, 2002: 37). Within the scene I wanted to contrast the active movement of Adam, running and jumping in the space, with the passive presence of the 'living' totems watching him. Unlike Lunar in alchemy, there is no emotion to be found within this passive energy. Instead it is synthetic and unnatural and stands out next to a flesh and blood Adam living in enthusiastically in his space.

The second half of the scene was inspired by the biblical tale of Abraham and Isaac; wherein God instructed Abraham to sacrifice his only son to prove his devotion. However, unlike the biblical tale, where God stops Adam and Isaac is unharmed, Adam is punished both physically and mentally in the name of Technology and receives no mercy from father or 'deity'.

Though there was a third party present within the biblical tale which could take partial responsibility for Abraham's actions, within the scene the issue of morality is on the father and on him alone. This again communicates the fact that we as humans are in reality in complete control of technology. How it is used and whether or not we directly and indirectly punish our fellow humans in the name of technological progress (such as Adam under the weight of the totems) is ultimately our decision to make and we must start to realise this. Though the system or 'deity' might appear to be self-governing, in reality it is merely an illusion we allow ourselves to believe in.

¹⁹ This statement, although subjective, served as a departure point for much of the work. It is a controversial topic and which I am still trying to form an opinion over. By speaking of and by displaying such suffering I hope to raise the question to help others as well as myself to form an opinion as to what our relationship is to pain and suffering in ourselves and others.

Scene Four: Window of Acknowledgement

The themes of tech neglect and poor communication extend within this scene. However, whereas Adam's use and contact with technology until now had not been a conscious decision on his part, I wished to show early stages of Adam's conscious pursuit and growing interest in technology. The scene serves as Adam's gateway into a technological future filled with joy and heartache. The aim was to employ a concept mentioned by Gray and referred to by the Italians as *la terribilita* - "the ambiguous feelings roused by mighty forces beyond the normal human scale: '*How horrible, we say, how marvellous*'" (Gray, 2002: 127).

To Adam, the ability to stop time, manipulate and connect with the world around him, as well as the 'love' and attention he receives from those who inhabit the digital world with him, is ultimately 'marvellous'. To us sitting and reading from the side-lines we see the 'horrible' and sad reality of an individual having to resort to technology to improve upon his reality, to obtain recognition, and to give himself a false sense of power.

The relationship between 'horror' and 'marvel' also plays itself off between Adam and his parents who represent both the present and the future of Adam's choice. Though his current relationship with technology gives him the attention he does not receive from his parents (even as he breaks down at the table or thirsts for something to drink) the inevitable consequence of this choice stands before him in the form of his father and mother. Like them he could close himself off to such a degree that he becomes a mere automata²⁰ with technological add-ons in the form of phones, tablets, computers and televisions.

Scene Five: Peer Education (The Online Selves)

I mentioned earlier how a school becomes a place for youthful discourse and exchange of technology. Teenagers and children also keep a strong focus on the media which markets the latest trends in fashion and technology and the school becomes the parade ground for these latest and greatest devices. Whereas the average individual could have the tendency to define and be defined by the amount and quality of possessions they own, the reality is becoming more and more prevalent, leading to relentless competition amongst children and teenagers.

During a child's development he or she will look to various objects, hobbies and social groups he / she believes will help establish an individual identity. As discussed previously, social applications and websites such as Facebook and YouTube become the perfect tools for creating and altering numerous

²⁰ Automata: A moving mechanical device made in imitation of a human being.

identities. With the help of these tools they try and climb social ranks (which is mainly the school ranks), and here difference between owning an Apple product or a cheaper brand of tech can mean the difference between being labelled a class idol or a laughing stock.

To prove a point I recall my father telling me childhood stories of how he idolised the “big, bald, overweight, men” who drove around his home town in their E-Class Mercedes Benz vehicles – a brand which today still carries the same status. After passing his driver’s licence and excelling in school my late grandfather decided to buy my father a sports edition Nissan 1400 half-ton bakkie / pick-up truck, which as a standard came fitted with bucket seats and mag rims. This turned my father into the talk of the town he used to tell me, although not too fondly, and a person of interest amongst his school peers.

What I am trying to hint at is that competing for status has always been a reality within our society, but a reality which is claiming younger victims of each new year that passes. Children who should care more about getting their hands and feet dirty outside on the playground have become preoccupied with upstaging their peers with their latest smartphones and tablets. Their uniquely constructed selves become nothing more links within a long chain of followers the illusion of a brighter future.

To start this scene I needed to create an atmosphere fitting this image. I decided to start my exploration by including a song written and sung by Marilyn Manson which I felt touched on the subject quite well. With *Disposable Teens* Manson challenges the shortcomings of the previous generation of revolutionaries who claimed they valued change, diversity and individuality but who have raised a generation which has become nothing more than slaves to their new system.

Although much of his criticism is directed towards formal religious systems (especially Christianity) it is also relevant to ‘Technotology’, a ‘religion’ which claims to revolutionise society but which has indoctrinated its followers and branded them as ‘disposable assets’. Like Manson stating “I never hated a one true god, but the god of the people I hated” it would not be hard to imagine the youth one day scorning this religion, its gods, and followers in the same way. Visually I would equate it to the prideful alchemical king drowning in the lake and calling to the prince to save him. The image does not indicate any desire from the prince to save his father, and the generations to come might not either. With the help of the song’s lyrics as well as its rebellious rhythm lingering in my thoughts I felt prepared to take on the rest of the scene, especially after the implementation of the musical mandala.

Brooding on topics like ‘disposability’, conveyed by Manson, ‘the assembly line’, discussed by Walker & Walker, and lastly, the concept of ‘corporate asset’, as discussed by Bothma, brought to mind the image of children moving in a line without a destination (Bothma 2013). The practice of assembly lines is nothing new to education system, but what I was trying to show was that all their

efforts were practically pointless. Whilst preoccupied with trends and competition, all their efforts at building individual identities and lifestyles would eventually still lead to one basic future; place in a world which does not care for diversity and which would pick them, use them, and then lose interest in them.

Without a clear idea of where the scene was heading, I decided to throw Adam into this strange environment and let him lead me through his actions. In many ways I had trouble letting go of my control over him. A large part of me wanted to consciously steer him into actions, but this would be me intruding. Even though Adam was my take on an everyman, I had to let him find his own way. Like during the ‘off-hand’ exercise, I tried focusing my attention on one thing; in the case being Adam’s emotions and expectations.

Previous scenes had established that Adam as an individual desired recognition and communication, but how would these needs be accepted by his own generation and within this new environment? Clearing my mind of any preconceived ideas and to be sensitive to stimuli from Adam as the character I let him lead me towards this line of aimlessly walking children. I saw him staring at it in confusion and felt his need for answers. It made sense that he would have questions and to want to desire inquiry as to what they were doing, yet at the same time be overcome by fear and excitement.

I let Adam try and attract their attention in the same way he had attempted with his parents, but learning from past attempts and seeing little results now meant that he had learnt from past mistakes. He would have to force himself to be heard and so this led to the act of pulling out the individual from the line, hoping that his physical contact and her break with the group would establish a line of communication. In order to increase the tension and frustration within Adam I wished for the girl to remain silent and not register his presence at all.

What I wanted to show was how even Adam could be forced to communicate and become ‘visible’ via technology. What was lacking though was incentive. Though the physical space had been created on stage I realised that the digital ‘reality’ which mirrored it was missing and that it could be used to communicate the theme of the scene more clearly, and hopefully inspire Adam to change his tactics and finally draw attention to himself.

Film and animation are less restricted when trying to represent new realities and metaphors. This is largely due to the fact that these mediums and their material are not bound by physical space or the laws of physics in the same way as the stage and theatre performers. What this medium would allow me to do was to represent the progression of dirt to tech-covered youth. The simplest way for this to be shown was by having the children trade their playground toys and apparatus for gadgets such as phones, tablets, portable music players and portable gaming consoles - again using the principle of

correspondence to relate the change in times to my own experiences and observations. But more than this I wanted to show how the modern era has brought about new teachers to accompany the old.

I therefore had the children marching through the school halls plastered with social media posters which, like teachers, overlook and supervise their behaviour. It was time again to bring the image back to the realm of the religious metaphors - much like alchemy. To draw inspiration for possible metaphors I started researching biblical dreams and prophecies. The first to truly draw my interest was pharaoh's dream about the seven fat cows being depowered by the seven starving cows, but which still remained skinny and unfulfilled. The tale touched on the idea that these children keep chasing new technology and new identities only to stay unfulfilled.

I decided to merge the school and biblical environment by having the children march into an abyss, a place and future unknown to them, only to try and reveal that their present and future was one of dissatisfaction. This I did by zooming out of a hollow eye-socket of famine child who with six others walk out of this Technotology stream to devour the perfect cyborg or machine self. But still they continue to search, remaining unfulfilled.

To draw attention again to this concept of digital identities I continued zooming out of the shot to reveal the daily internet activities and profiles of these children. From status updates to YouTube subscriptions, Instagram photos and Twitter feeds. Shown on the screen were the lives of individuals who seemed more alive and more human than their real selves. I knew that at some point I would have to link the displayed material with the actions on stage and what better way to do that then to show the digital profile of the girl standing next to Adam.

Her 'life' is displayed on-screen for all to see and it gives Adam hope that there might be someone to communicate with apart from this shell of a person in front of him. However, if he cannot communicate with her on his terms than perhaps it would be possible through hers, and this is one of the reasons why he takes the picture with her. The second reason is to feel part of something. The need for recognition drives Adam to take the same action he did when he was making fun of his parents and through this he hopes to be drawn into this society instead of feeling marginalised.

With this picture Adam again makes his mark in the digital world as he did during the previous scene, but unlike what has been seen until now, it isn't always a world which is very welcoming to its occupants. Trolls haunt its plains and pick on the weak. To show the audience this side of the internet and to emphasise what little place the techno peasant like Adam has in it, I did not merely want it to be displayed on screen.

For this reason I decided to have the scholars push Adam to the ground and take pictures of him, mocking him while he is at his most vulnerable. In a way this corresponds to the Principle of Rhythm.

The pendulum has swung back and Adam finds himself been frozen on the ground whilst been paraded all over the internet. This parade sets off an avalanche of posts, captioned pictures and videos and shows not only how technology is often used to hurt others (techno bullying) but how these acts and hurtful opinions are shamelessly magnified online. Just as a visual or verbal metaphor magnifies information by making it interesting, by focusing in on it, so the media does the same thing. The screen focuses our attention by blocking off the outside world, and within this scene all that is seen is Adam's flaws, but not the flaws of those around him.

A problem I encountered soon after this section of the scene was how to end it or at least merge the last few events with events in the next scene. I decided not to dwell on it at present and moved on. By focusing on a next scene I might be presented with a possible solution.

Scene Six: Reborn As an Asset

When considering the idea that people are potentially trying to remake themselves and, unlike the Pinocchio tale, become more than human, one realises once more that we are ultimately our own Genesis experiment, or Prima Materia, to be altered where nature had failed. However, much unlike alchemists, we do not look upon our Prima Materia with the same value and respect, but instead force it through the commercial 'factories' that are science, media, wars, and capitalism to become the perfect instrument, the perfect asset to ourselves and society.

It was time that Adam reach the age where it has become compulsory to be reborn and rebranded as an asset to the adult world and its corporations; in this case being the Genesis Corporation - a company striving to create a more advanced world with more advanced people. I wanted to try and capture within this scene the façade put up by most of these industries to try and hide the ugly realities behind them. When reading the Walker interviews with the factory workers, one realises that the owner climbing into his brand new luxury car, with its smooth black leather seats, polished paint job and spotless chrome decals has no idea or reference as to how many men slaved behind the machine foreman for meagre pay to provide him with the opportunity of driving it out of the showroom and denting it at the next corner. I aimed at rebranding Adam via the simple means of treating him in the same way one of these cars would be by a reviewer.

Like this product, I wanted Adam to become assessed according to his physical and psychological specifications. I wanted him to be test driven by the corporation to determine his strengths and weaknesses. I did so by placing him in a position of complete vulnerability; bound to a chair, blood samples, fingerprints, retinal scans and BMI indexes would be collected from him, making him look like a mere piece of meat undergoing a quality check. To worsen this discomfort I wanted his personal

life to be unwrapped in front of his eyes and for everyone else to see. However, now more than ever I needed to balance subjectivity (Luna) and objectivity (Son) as a writer. I could not let my feelings for Adam as an abused individual take over the scene, but also couldn't be overly rational and ignore his discomfort completely.

Like the Prima Materia all his 'impurities', and that which establishes him as 'Adam', would be identified, extracted and scrutinized with the naked eye. When Adam is finally cleared fit for use, both by the company as well as the audience who receive feedback from the assessment, he is given a number. He is no longer identified as Adam but falls in with the rest of the company 'assets' as member or unit 4905, and as 4905 it was time for him to be divided into the system.

Scene Seven: Worked By the Line

The following scene was largely inspired by the factory scene in Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*. Within the film four men are also at work on the assembly line and hammer away at parts moving past them on the conveyor belt while Chaplin's character struggles to keep up with the rhythm demanded by the job. Though this scene ties closely to the Walker interviews as well as the fast paced life-style modern society currently experiences, I wanted to show how things have changed since then, and what effects this 'line' has had on these individuals.

Whereas the workers in *Modern Times* still retained the majority of their humanity and free will, scene seven would have to reveal the men as automata; individuals not only following the rhythm of the line physically, but who had become physically, mentally and spiritually synchronised with an emotionless system. Whereas Chaplin's Character had to contend with the system as well and his temperamental co-workers; Adam has no such luck. Within this work environment no distinction is to be made between them and the line, and this leaves Adam virtually alone.

As with the previous scenes I wanted a third party overseeing the actions on stage. In other words, not only would this party or system be monitoring the performers, but also the 'line' which acts as their foreman. However, unlike the previous scenes I did not want this mechanical entity to be represented in any humanoid form such as was done using the Angel, the mechanical face, or Eve's voice. Instead it would establish and maintain its presence by means of alarms and tones, and hopefully show that much of technology's influence and presence is not always observed and mostly goes completely unnoticed.

Much like alarm clocks, ringing telephones, low battery tones, reminder tones, etc., signal us to take specific actions, in the same way these men / automata are signalled by this system to take action. Just as our personal technologies do not care whether we are physically or mentally capable of responding to their demands and executing these actions, so the system does not care or distinguish whether or

not these men are sound enough of body and mind. Even if one of them were to succumb to death it would matter little to the system which only has one main focus, on the job that must be done and the quotas which needs to be met.

I tried proving this point in the same way as Chaplin in *Modern Times*, by having the lead character's human limitations scorned by alarms and insensitive co-workers (who we still regard as part of the Technotology system). What Chaplin tried to convey, as well as myself, and what most corporations fail to realise, is that the system is not sustainable. Humanly we are not meant to keep up with this mechanically paced Technotology religion, the bells and whistles of computers and cellular phones, the 24-hour employee stand-by mode demanded by the corporations.

A time will come when, like Adam and Charlie at the end of their scenes, humanity will break down physically and mentally, and will drag the system down with it. I often hear statements like: "I cannot switch off", "My ears have become so tuned to my cell phone", "I wish I could just do away with my phone and computer for just one day at least", and this should come as no surprise. If nature cannot keep up with these technological demands, how do we expect to do so?

What I suspect, and what helps fuel the story, is that our modern world is steering us in the opposite direction of what writers and alchemists should be doing - placing quality, unpressured focus on the task at hand. I believe that this is also the main reason why so many writers struggle to practice their art. Has our consciousness become só tuned to the overbearing voices of the media and of 'progress' that we have started internalising this madness within our subconscious? And when the need does arise for us to become quiet within ourselves, might this be why we fail? Though I cannot speak factually for everyone, this is most definitely a problem with I have been struggling with for a few years and why I so often procrastinate the act of writing.

I decided to read through what I had written so far and was unsatisfied. It was again the voice of the inner critic feeding me on the myths of being a perfect writer. With me placing this judgment on myself, I was cutting myself off from the characters as I wanted to take control instead of giving them room to act freely. Feeling overwhelmed I stepped away from the work for two days, but made sure to meditate on the theme and on the mandalas which I had used before. I tried to place some focus other activities as well, such as my Tai Chi, like the drawing exercise, Tai Chi was also a way for me to practice being totally present; only focusing on my breathing and on the energy and heat within my palms. After regaining some energy during the two days I decided to get back to my work.

Scene Eight: The Human Anomaly

It is ironic how one can lose sight of the dependence of technology in our lives most often fail to view ourselves as cyborgs, yet at the same time give a cold stare to those who decide to break away from the modern technological lifestyles due to either their inability to cope or lack of desire for what is now considered the ‘evolved lifestyle’. Ironically we are also fascinated by these individuals and cannot help but write articles about them or analyse them to see what motivates them to be different. Perhaps the natural human being has become somewhat of an anomaly in its own right. I liked the idea of the natural becoming unnatural and decided to explore it more

Within scene eight I wanted to depict a mortal characteristic being studied by the Genesis Corp. as a taboo or mysterious subject. Having Adam faint in the previous scene made the transition to scene nine somewhat simpler as this left him in a sleeping state during which he could dream. What is more human, more mortal than the ability to dream?

I tried recalling the last time I dreamt but nothing came to mind. I decided to do some research on technology and its impact on dreams and came across an article on the effects ‘screen time’ has on the rapid eye movement (REM) sleep state which results in dreams. As it turns out the bright lights of digital screens put us in a state of alertness which delays and reduces the amount of REM sleep an individual has in a night (Collins, 2014).

I now had a human activity which would place Adam under the microscope to be studied as if a lab rat. The dream state also provided a potential playground for creating metaphors and linking our realm to the digital realm. I decided for the sake of quick scene change to use the conveyor belt as a hospital bed. In a way this served as its own metaphor; one which displayed Adam as another object in a long assembly which needed to be adjusted to fit in with the system. As representative for the scientific system and its religious connotation, I again brought in the Technotology priest / doctor. Adam as sinner was to be studied in order to be understood and later be purified.

Still drawing on inspiration from Genesis, I decided to use the Garden of Eden as well as the Tree of Knowledge as symbolic references within Adams dream. The plan was to try and contrast the natural surroundings of nature with the realm of technology and to see what tension could be created. Starting the dream sequence it made sense to show Adam in a dark and cramped hallway, scared and running from something.

This was also a way of matching Adam against the children in the school hall; his emotional behaviour in opposition to their mechanical march. The start of the scene also matches and draws a through line between a scared, tired and hopeless Adam being oppressed by the system in the previous scene. Breaking through the doors Adam enters the Garden of Eden, and utopia of peace, space and

beauty. I try to expose the audience to the sights and sounds of nature on screen in order to instil within them and Adam a sense of tranquillity.

Though the imagery and the world within Adam's dream is one of beauty, the line between reality and illusion, physical and digital needed to be blurred for the sake of showing a current trend within society. Though the digital world and its personalities are nothing more than an illusion in the form of data, we still equate it to a tangible reality. A common example of this is the world of online role playing games and how players start referring to their created characters / identities and the fictional worlds as people and places that truly exist and possess life.

I tried drawing out the garden (or at least its atmosphere) into the physical space by means of lighting and character. The priest and nurse fade into darkness as the lights on them go out and the stage is lit in large woodland green and copper leaf shapes, moving as if stirred by the wind. Whilst moving through the forest, Adam takes in his 'natural' surroundings with all its sights and sounds until he reaches the centre of the metaphor, the Tree of Knowledge.

Having the Tree centred in a clearing distinguishes it from the rest of nature, but not necessarily in a negative way. I am not trying to challenge the gift of knowledge by taking the religious stance and saying that it is a gift only to be possessed by a deity. On the contrary. Though I do not deny how much good can come out of its depths, what I am saying is that as a tool it should not be plucked selfishly. As an infinitely powerful tool it requires scholars who are mature, empathetic and sensitive to the fragility of our natural world. History has proven time and again how ego can destroy societal development and one need not look much further than a famous mathematician to find an obvious example.

Einstein said that he regretted his role in the Manhattan Project and that he would have never lifted a finger in the process of creating the atom bomb if he had known that it would be used for the destruction of others. This inspired me to drop the bombs on Adam's Eden and to summarize the destruction of our natural world. My blame was not solely on weapons and nations but on the larger society. I kept these weapons and the individuals using them hidden in the footage, because the war waged against nature and its inhabitants is not always seen or heard, but comes in many forms; from noticeable bombs, to carbon emissions, and escalators which turn the middle-aged man and child as cripple as the elderly. Apart from the sounds of gunfire and explosions the only visual display that danger is approaching is in the darkening red sky.

To shock Adam out of his dream I wanted him to succumb to the fruit of the tree and pay the ultimate price, namely death. The first explosion merely disorients Adam, leaving him helpless, like countless of victims in war torn countries, who like Adam finally succumb to death. Adam is lucky in the sense that he can awaken from this dream where so many others face this sad reality head-on each

day. But before Adam has the opportunity to process the dream and his heightened emotions he is given an anaesthetic. He is prohibited from experiencing and contaminating the system by experiencing even the most basic elements of being human. These elements make him a threat to the ‘perfect’ world which requires that he be controlled by its representatives.

In summary, the scene highlights the taboo nature of humanity within our modern society but also displays the illusions of our ‘real’ digital selves roaming in our digital worlds. It displays the consequence of misused knowledge by drawing inspiration and referencing the Garden of Eden, the Tree of Knowledge and the picking of the fruit.

Scene Nine: We the Watchers

As mentioned in the previous discussion, human weakness is scorned in all its forms by modern society, so much so that we as individuals are continuously trying to construct the perfect cyborg selves which will save us from the hurt and judgement. But what of those who cannot hide themselves, namely the institutionalised? This also begs the question as to how far the human mind can be pushed by the ever-present Technotology system before it breaks down and sinks into madness.

I wanted the experiments on Adam to continue but this time in a more passive manner. I also wanted to bring him face to face with those who had reached the utmost point of madness, who had seen the ugly reality of Technotology but who were no longer taken seriously due to being labelled insane, primitive, and old fashioned, by a ‘healthy’ society. It made sense to lock Adam away in a mental institution, a place which housed these shunned individuals and which forced him to share a space with them.

Adam needed to be trapped, not only by the system but by the reality of what he might become. Thus patient 1001 was born. Having the man burst out in manic laughter was a way for me to emphasise the futility of Adam’s escape of the system. I wanted to push the chilling thought of entrapment and let the patient poke at Adam. Due to the play not containing physical dialogue I needed to find way for them to communicate yet stay voiceless and bound to their immediate space. I decided that the placement of keyboards and the use of the projector screen as a chat screen would be fitting.

The probing revealed that not only was Adam trapped, but he was being watched, he was always being watched. The aspect of privacy of personal space was openly being challenged. In reality we are no better off. On every street corner, every shop, in front of our laptop and cell phone screens we have cameras pointed at us, but like Adam we are largely oblivious to the fact. It was time to make Adam aware and here the screens would gain be used by displaying the live footage of himself in the ward.

This made the patient seem less mentally disturbed if we take into account that he was right and that he had been forced to the edge of sanity. This sends Adam down the same mental path as he reaches his mental limits and becomes desperate to escape.

Scene Ten: The Voiceless

I wanted Adam's madness to drive him into a vulnerable state, one which made him open to suggestion and easily to manipulate. I wanted him to conform and become one of the 'automata'. After his breakdown in the ward Adam is now seen back at work, only this time he is different. He is unresponsive and expressionless. He moves mechanically to the same bells and whistles sounded by the system as they change places. Adam has finally conformed. But where was his humanity to be found now?

This purpose of this scene was to emphasise the reality that the expressionless force themselves into false online identities, while claiming to be human, but that this does not make them as safe as they would like to believe. Even whilst communicating under creative chat names in order to hide their identities from the greater system and others, even whilst being expressive here in this virtual realm, in reality they are still stuck, still silent behind their screens. This idea is emphasised by the contrast created between what is said on screen and what reactions we see in the space.

As tempers flare and jokes shoot back and forth, the physical bodies remain mechanical. They pass one another without any hint at physical communication as they are being monitored not only in their physical space, but online as well, which becomes evident when the system picks up on the fact that they are engaged in pointless communication instead of working.

Scene Eleven: The Initiation

It was time for Adam to solidify his place in the Technotology belief system and take part in a ritual that would display his subservience to it. One of the first ideas that came to mind was a communion of sorts, but instead of the devotees receiving bread and wine they would receive headphones and a music player. I grant that the symbol of a portable music player in comparison to bread and wine might seem even stranger.

Apart from the fact they were now taking part in a communion I wanted the scene to progress into the ultimate immersion and praise of the system. This I felt could be done by means of music and dance. With the devotees closed off to the outside world by means of the earphones and music players they could engage and lose themselves in the infectious beats of electronic music.

We often hear of trance festivals and clubs being compared to ancient drum and dance rituals. The beats are able to instil (as the name suggests) trance in those dancing. Some of the inspiration also came from the Zion dance scene in the *Matrix Reloaded*, directed by the Wachowski twins. The priest, watching his congregation could take the role as DJ, pulling the strings of his congregation and move them to his will, like puppets.

Yet even in this techno mass void of all inhibitions Adam could not fit in entirely. He needed to stand out and betray himself as being different. He needed to be out of sync. With the performers all dancing I figured that the best way to show this would be with Adam being knocked around as they all dance in the space. Finally he could be knocked to the ground and snap out of the spell he had been placed under.

I wanted to expose the effects of Technotology once more and truly bring it home to Adam and the audience. The projector screen would again be ideal for this and on I wanted to display the various lives affected by it, the bloodshed it had brought. I wanted to show mankind not fit enough to wield such power and I wanted it to tug at the heart of Adam. While the others dance oblivious to the destruction they praise Adam stares in shock.

The ritual needed to be pushed further. An idol needed to be presented to not only solidify the idea of praise towards a deity but to give Technotology a human face and show that it is ultimately a tool of the elite. I could hoist down a sculpted idol, a metal man much like the metal children devoured in the animated footage. This metal man would be the ideal the utopia of what these devotees wished to become.

I wanted this figure to brandish fire, the first tool and the element which gave birth to technology. In his other hand I wanted him to wield a globe symbolising humanity's control over the planet and their power to crush it. Seeing Adam's disbelief in the cause the priest as holy individual and judge finally shuns Adam from their ranks.

Scene Twelve: Switch Off

Adam is truly alone. He is back to where he was as a child and so I thought it fitting to bring back a figure that gave him comfort at that time. The angel again appears but not in the screen, but this time as a physical person. One untainted by the system. I wanted Adam to have a last moment of doubt and pull the strings of the familiar.

With the angel appearing on the screen Adam would be place in two minds. Does he go back to the familiar, the safety of the system which comforted him as a child and served as parent to him, or does

he risk exploring a different and more natural side of humanity. I needed to spur things on and place Adam under threat. Enter the priest and the congregation to rid the system of the two undesirables.

The two individuals are caught. A solution needed to present itself. I thought about the idea of a system and the fact that any system is able to crash or to be shut down. It was time for Adam to sacrifice the familiar and so I presented him with the solution in the form of an 'OFF' switch on the altar. As Adam fights through the crowd and pushes the button it all comes tumbling down.

I needed to find a way to justify the 'OFF' switch and the theme conveyed by it. It would be more effective if the theme could be carried through the play and would be interesting to see where it all started and how the system first came to be turned on.

Added Scene: Fire

It is possible to regard fire as the element that birthed technology. In many ways this was the 'ON' switch which set into motion the fast paced evolution of science in its many forms. I wanted to show mankind before it adopted the ideal of automata as well. Humankind then was cautious of its environment and more cautious of fellow human beings.

I thought it fitting for a group of individuals to face one another in the space. They needed incentive to do so however. To this I add Pandora's Box. An object of mystery much like what I imagine fire was to humans back then. Fighting it out they would display the primal nature of humans, the need for survival, and their inability to share resources. I also wanted to show the other side of him. The side which could stand shoulder to shoulder with another and when the time came they would put their differences aside and open the box together. Here then was the start and end of the natural human and the beginning of progress.

4.6 Fermentation: Stepping Away

Now that the Lesser Stone has been created, the hermaphroditic child of Sol and Luna, rationality and emotion, the solution needs to be putrefied in order for it to die and be reborn as a new being. The alchemist must allow the solution and himself / herself to rest. He must allow for bacteria to grow, for him to meditate on what has been done as well as on their personality and so be inspired and energised by a new power (Carty, 2007: 48). The most important step is the step back from the product and themselves, one which the writer must take as well.

When the writer steps away from the draft, or retreats into a spiritual withdrawal from the world, the following takes place according to Haarhoff, who gives his own account of the meditation or fermentation stage:

“We forget it. Like a new wine we store it in a room where it can mature. And in the dark, time acts like yeast on dough. I know when I try to improve a text too soon after writing it; I waste my time in frustration. I can see what’s not working but I can’t come up with any alternative. If I am patient and leave the play or story alone, then when I come back as my own reader, I instantly see how to improve it”

(Haarhoff, 1998: 216).

Going into the stage of Fermentation I felt a strong sense of guilt descend upon me. As the writer it was my job and obligation to be productive and active in my work – so I believed. I had to force myself to take on the belief that idleness also had a productive role to play in the writing process. According to Morley this was just another way of recharging one’s batteries for the next active phase (Morley, 2007: 131). I decided to send my draft to a supervisor of mine to get a fresh perspective on the work.

Like the act of stepping away this was another step which fell well outside of my comfort zone. As the creator I knew the work had numerous flaws and I was hesitant to show this to an individual who had years of experience on me. However, I knew that I had made a good choice on who was about to lay eyes on my work for the first time. I knew that this individual was on my side but would also be objective and honest in their feedback. Except of telling me exactly how to change what needed to be changed this individual would not push me in a specific direction but would leave the final choice with me as they knew that this was also part of my growing process as a prospective writer (Bishop & Starkey, 2006: 204 & Haarhoff, 1998, 220).

Whilst absent from the work I was not absent from listening and reading the world as I had done during the stage of Calcination (see section 4.1). I kept my senses and thoughts open to events and discussions which touched on the topic of Technotology. What truly amazed me was how many

individuals I overheard complaining about society's inability to think and reason without the help of Technology. What reassured me that this was not just a popular local topic but one which extended its reach was that it was on the lips of broadcasters outside of the state and country as well. Whilst driving in Windhoek a broadcaster from a local Namibian radio station had commented on how many trivial 'how to' searches were made in both Namibia and South Africa on a daily basis.

I decided to follow up her search and came across the following leading 'how to' searches for 2015: How to smoke, how to apologise, how to kick, how to cast, how to prank, how to treat, among a few others. On the 29th of December whilst having breakfast and watching the local E-News channel's *Unwind*-segment, the local news broadcaster was discussing the importance of 'switching off' and stepping away from our mobile devices each day. Within the discussion they showed footage wherein average South Africans were approached on the street and asked if they could survive without a phone and internet for one day. The majority of the people interviewed believed this to be too difficult an undertaking and that they would not know what to do with themselves (Unwind, 2015).

In other words, they would be unable to accept and appreciate their immediate world without the help or distraction of a mobile devices or the internet. It should be noted that it was also during the fermentation stage that I stumbled upon Samantha Luiz's article about child 'boredom-busting' applications for cell phones and tablets. I knew that these topics which I had come across via the media weren't new to the times, but that I had conditioned myself through my research and writing to become more aware of these discussions in the media and on the street. One could say that I had made room for these occurrences to present themselves to me during this stage of Fermentation.

Three weeks passed without me looking at the play and during which time I had worked part-time and enjoyed a bit of the festivities with my family and friends. In all honesty I came to appreciate the break after bridging my initial guilt trip. During this time I had also received the feedback from my supervisor and read through the notes he had given me, which gave me a bit to reflect on before I would start revising the play.

After three weeks I felt it was time for me to return. I read through the play a few times and compared it to the notes. The biggest criticism was that the play lacked an arch. This meant that there was no real increase in tension or build-up towards a climax. To put it bluntly, the play was flat, monotonous, and too random, and returning to it again confirmed this. Sticking to rules and process of fermentation I decided to return to my books and meditate on some of the advice given about plot, tension and character progression.

Author Margaret Lucke and playwright Steve Gooch define conflict as two forces working in opposition and that a story is established by showing a character attempting to overcome conflict in order to achieve their goal (Lucke, 1998: 55 & 56 & Gooch, 1988: 59). As author it is then my

responsibility to expose the character to as much trouble as possible to keep the story moving forward and building up to a climax. According to Lucke I needed to ask myself a series of questions and determine whether or not the play possessed sufficient tension and to assess what was lacking in terms of character, story, plot and setting. These to-the-point questions would form part of my Distillation phase.

4.7 Distillation – Boiling the Solution

(See page 5 – 11 of *Techmata Planning And Revision* addendum.) Distillation is the stage wherein the solution is boiled and turned into a purer condensed state. Neither egotistical nor unconscious influences are present here, and what is finally achieved is the purification of the ‘unborn self’ as the pinnacle of what the practitioner can be. To rid my draft of its flaws and impurities required that I put it as well as myself through an intensive ‘boiling process’ of to-the-point assessment questions.

In order for them to be effective I would have to rid myself of emotion and sentimentality to what had been created so far. I could not be too precious of any previous ideas or scenes or otherwise risk the play maintaining its monotonous state. In a sense this links back to the alchemical illustration of the father-king devouring his son. Although the son is a part of him, the king shows no sentimentality or regret when he swallows the prince. The illustration also represents the act of the spirit entering into the body. Although the spirit / essence of the play was present, it required some critical observation to solidify it effectively in its body, which is the written work and the performance. Acting on Lucke’s advice I asked myself the following (Lucke, 1998: 56, 57 & 66):

What does the character want to accomplish?

Within the draft Adam wished for the establishment of communication between him and his fellow humans. He desired affection and recognition from them as a human being and as an individual. But these were very general desires and as goals they lacked the impact needed to drive the play and create trouble for him. Apart from waving his hands about, the play lacked any real daring actions by Adam to try and fulfil these desires. I therefore had to reassess and establish greater goals for him.

What is at stake should the character succeed or fail?

If Adam were to succeed in achieving his current goals he would not feel so alone or rejected. The audience would feel happy for him, too happy, and either forget about the play the next morning, or leave the space disappointed and irritated with the fact that he succeeded without any trouble or sacrifice. On the other hand, if Adam were to fail he would be no better off than where he was at the start of the play and the plot would again lack danger in the form of sacrifice. The play required Adam to put his head on the chopping block; something to make the path towards his goal a dangerous one and something to encourage the audience to pay attention to his actions and the developments in the story.

Who is the main opposing force?

Within the draft the main opposing force was the Technotology system which influenced those around Adam and created an unforgiving environment for him to be in. I felt relatively happy with the System as antagonist but felt that perhaps the priest as representative could be utilized more and prove a greater danger to Adam.

How do the protagonist's strengths and weaknesses influence the progress of the story?

Adam's weakness within the story was his timid behaviour and human emotions. His need for affection and dislike of violence turns him into a scared 'pet' that has no choice but to live within the environment it has been placed in. His strength would be his resilience and the ability to have stayed moral and human for as long as he has; but even that is cut short after joining the Genesis Corporation. Neither his strengths nor weaknesses would serve the play as he does take any real action to be deemed interesting. In fact Adam's role was merely being present amidst the events. I needed to define Adam more in order set a story in motion.

To remedy and add to the play I needed to raise the stakes, eliminate options, isolate the character, and "ignite a ticking bomb" within the play (Lucke, 1998: 64 & 65). Raising the stakes proved not to be as easy as I had initially thought it would be. Due to the fact that I had grown fond of Adam, regardless of him being undefined and timid, as the author I had spared him much discomfort, unlike the father-king in alchemy. Like the father-king I had to discard my sentimental feelings towards the character.

I thought back on how the System judged Adam as incomplete, as defective, and wondered what would change if he were to be born with a real mental or physical disability? Lucke's writing on the 'ticking bomb' element brought to mind the idea of an old wind-up alarm clock driving the play. Perhaps it could do just that, drive the play by driving Adam?

Out of pure curiosity I went about typing "born with a clockwork heart" into the Google search engine and came across a headline that proved to be quite useful. It lead to a description of the 2013 animation film *Jack and the Cuckoo-Clock Heart* wherein a young boy has his heart replaced with a cuckoo-clock at birth (Jack and the Cuckoo-Clock Heart, 2013). Due to the fragile nature of the device he must avoid feeling strong emotions such as love and anger or risk death. Jack thus has to stop himself from being completely human just for the sake of preserving his life. Inspired by the idea of life vs. humanity I decided to make use of the search engine yet again and Googled "staying human in a cyborg world".

The first headline read “Cyborg Actor Says Superhero is ‘trying to Stay Human’”. I recognised the character *Cyborg* from DC Comics. The background to this character is that he has his body replaced with an advanced prosthesis after being mutilated by a gigantic creature. Much like Robocop, Cyborg is more machine than human and soon starts to upgrade himself to the point where his mannerisms become machine-like and he loses parts of his personality and that which makes him human.

Cyborg and Jack’s stories brought to mind the question of what would happen if Adam were born with a wind-up alarm clock (a primitive piece of technology) in a world governed by far more advanced technology? As I tried proving through the birth scene, we are practically born part machine through all the scans and vaccinations we receive to improve our fragile and defective bodies. We will keep changing faster and faster especially when taking into account the latest breakthroughs in gene therapy and the societal push for designer baby technology.

What then if Adam were to be born into a fictional world where Transhumanism²¹ was practiced in full effect? What if Adam is born with a less advanced heart fused to his chest, a clockwork heart which needs to be wound up to keep him from dying? This same equivalent it found in Marvel comics when we look at the characters that are Ironman and Robocop. Immediately this would give Adam a new goal - to become better and more advanced like his fellow humans, who follows and believes wholeheartedly in the Transhumanist messiah of Technotology. To keep the story interesting this goal would have to develop and change as the story progressed.

To remedy this problem, I needed to focus on the antagonist. I needed the antagonist to unconsciously prove that this was no life worth having. Perhaps Adam would come to this realisation by clashing with the emotionally cut off individuals who he so admired once? Perhaps the system by means of the priest could try and force him to change and embrace the ‘one true path’? Whichever way, the idea was established in my mind and would have to be explored as I went about reviving Adam from his timid state. The clockwork heart introduced an extra element into the play as well; something to ensure a build-up in tension.

With the fragile mechanical heart in his chest another antagonist would be able to rear its head in the play – death. Although he would fight the transplant to keep his humanity, the complication of a failing heart (not being able to wind it up anymore) would force him to choose which is more important: a long comfortable and modern life or his humanity. The themes of humanity versus

²¹Transhumanism: The belief that the human race can evolve beyond its current physical and mental limitations by means of science and technology. This includes technological augmentations to the human body.

advancement would thus be symbolized by Adam's ticking heart versus the messiah which is modern technology. To make the story clear in my mind I decided to write down its basic premise:

In a near futuristic world where Transhumanism and human augmentation is commercially practiced, a boy is born with a primitive clockwork heart fused to his chest. He soon learns that his dreams of being fixed might not live up to his expectations. However, when his heart starts to fail Adam must choose between losing his humanity and embracing death.

The next step was to set up the plot by determining the inciting incident, complications, crises points /plot points, climax, and resolution (Lucke, 1998: 80 – 81). The inciting incident would be Adam's birth and the discovery that he is disabled and possesses a less clockwork heart. Complications arise when Adam struggles to keep up with his peers due to his heart needing to be wound up regularly; this also means that he is rejected by his more advanced brothers and sisters. More difficulties are established when Adam starts realising that the more advanced technology implanted into his peers are what make them so mechanical and emotionally cut off as they are mere slaves to a larger system capitalistic system. He thus starts to doubt his dream of becoming like them.

A crisis point arises when Adam's heart becomes faulty and can no longer be wound up. The climax takes place when Adam must choose between having his new heart installed, which will turn him into an autonomous slave, or keep his failing heart and die an emotionally and morally intact individual. Though I had the climax in mind I was unable to come up a clear resolution at the time and decided to carry on working with what I had so far.

I realise the reader might argue that the techniques and assessments which made up my Distillation phase should have been implemented before writing the draft. To this I answer that is just one way of approaching a text. Morley reinforces this when he compares the planner and the jumper. Thorough planning and plotting makes many a writer feel a sense of comfort in their work, and lays down a path which simplifies their writing process, while the same technique cuts others off from any spontaneity and surprise and makes them feel trapped (Morley, 2007: 127).

What this also shows yet again is the close relation between alchemy and writing. As I stated in the introduction, both practices pride themselves in experimentation, and with any experiment there is bound to be failures. Just as the alchemist repeats the steps in the Opus to improve their technique, so the writer does the same. From this experiment and failure I learned that my planning would have to be more precise in the future when writing physical theatre plays and that I cannot only leave it to impulse.

Though I have usually tried to plan out my plot as much as possible at the start of writing previous plays, within this specific project I felt the desire to explore my impulses first, mimicking how myself and others have always approach physical theatre, and play around with a story before returning to it to tidy it up. With a more suspenseful plot and a revived character in my arsenal I set about undertaking the final challenge of the alchemical process; the stage of Coagulation.

4.8 Coagulation – Writing the Final Piece

As the seventh and final stage of the Magnum Opus is, chemically it is the precipitation of the distilled substance. On a psychological level this is the stage during which the alchemist is finally raised to a state of absolute confidence which is characterised by the highest aspirations. The alchemist is in the ultimate state of awareness and from them the Ultima Materia of their soul is released. Physically, the Divine Elixir or the Stone rejuvenates the body to become the perfect vessel.

To the writer this should be the phase in which he reaches the state of ultimate confidence within themselves about their work and abilities. This can metaphorically be seen as the philosopher's stone which has been crafted within the practitioner and with which the person can turn the draft, as base metal, into gold. In the Emerald Tablet it is summed up in the following description:

“Thus will you obtain the Glory of the Whole Universe. All Obscurity will be clear to you. This is the greatest Force of all powers, because it overcomes every subtle thing and penetrates every Solid thing” (Carty, 2007: 50).

Though I had found new confidence in my abilities, characters and plot, it would be impossible have a complete play worked out in one's mind. The art of writing will always be trial and error but at least my confidence in the potential product was great enough to pursue the task of writing the final. It should be noted however that this phase, like those before it, is characterised by both rational and emotional elements. Rationally I am commenting on society's relationship to technology, but I also needed to make use of my own history and emotions to help fuel my ideas. As is required by the Coagulation Phase, I tried to prevent one from outweighing the other by means of meditation, staying present, and trying not to sympathise with Adam as my character.

Scene One Part A: Birth of The New Age

I wanted the audience to be fully aware at the start of the play of the type of world into which Adam would be born. Whereas I had spent months on research and observation, I wanted to distil / condense the accumulated knowledge into a video, which left out the unnecessary noise of the media and focused purely on the subject - much like the distillation stage in Alchemy. The goal was that the philosophy and the eventual reality of the new age technological ideals to be juxtaposed with the primitive/disabled Adam. To fully appreciate the world and to prevent any later confusion I felt that they had to see how humanity had reached this near future Transhumanist era in the play and be made aware of how humanity building towards it. For this reason I included the slide-show of humanity's evolution.

It shows how radically humankind and its inventions have changed over the centuries and how faith has shifted from spiritual gods to the god of science and technology. The goal was to ignite the fires of calcination within the audience, or at least to expose them to the fire if they would not do so willingly. If they were presented with their history and with their current lifestyle, as I had to do for myself during the calcination and dissolution stages, perhaps they could start to notice their insecurities and the personal myths to which they tie themselves.

To help emphasise that the story takes place in the near future I included the Genesis advertisement to show how technology which in reality is still in its experimental phase is commercially available in Adam's world. The secondary aim of the advertisement is to highlight the presence of the capitalist system within scientific research. As Einstein realised to his dismay after inventing the atom bomb, the military and billion dollar corporations will always ensure that they obtain complete control over new technologies.

Technology is a commodity and information is a powerful weapon in physical and corporate war. I wanted the advertisement to market the idealised utopia of Transhumanism and Technotology: a world without weakness, without physical or mental constraints, where time is freed and can be spent on the self and family. It speaks to us as individuals as we are all aware of the fast paced lifestyle which most of us are being forced to live and the tolls it takes on the body and mind. In many ways this lifestyle stands in complete opposition to the lifestyle of a writer or alchemist. Whereas the writer and alchemist live by trial and error and uncertainties, the Transhumanist world is one of security, of concrete certainties, and in sense devoid of magical mystery.

Inspired by the symbols of alchemy (especially after reviewing Jung's work on the alchemical tree) and the act of transmutation, I thought it fitting to make use of the philosopher's stone and the Tree of Life as symbols coinciding with the Transhumanism ideals. I had sat myself down once more and meditated on the stone metaphor and how valued it is within the art. I thought about the current age and observed the world through my own memories (about popular topics and humanities daily needs) and drew a connection between the stone and science. As a writer I tried to stay as objective as possible so as not to mistake prejudices for truthful memories. What came out of it was the following theorem:

One can view science as the philosopher's stone which is being utilised to turn the basic and flawed human into the perfect (golden) specimen. The Tree of Life in biblical terms also corresponds to the human inspired by knowledge. In alchemical terms the tree is another symbol for the transmutation

process. The seed as prima materia is planted which then grows into the perfected state and returns to the earth to spread its wisdom through the fruit it bears and drops.

I decided to combine them by having the Stone morph into a tree, to have the Transhumanist life be marketed as a natural evolution. To hint at the reality of the modern automata individual I combined these symbols with the circle of the 'ON' symbol which together with the horizontal tree formed the logo for the Genesis Corporation. Another hint was the branding of the augmented individuals with the 'ON' symbol on their foreheads. In many ways I was also inspired by the research on 'puffers', false alchemists, who take valuable knowledge and abuse it to fulfil their own material needs. It was now time to break with utopia and move on to a second birth, the birth of the defective individual.

Scene One Part B: Birth of the Reject

For the most part, the scene remained the same. The first noticeable change was the removal of the two groups of men and women who enter the space to inspect the image of the baby. In the draft their presence did not serve a clear enough function and merely wasted time which could be spent elsewhere. The second change was to the relationship between the husband and wife. Whereas before he stood by as the husband trying to comfort and support his wife, now he was an emotionless and autonomous onlooker, which would fit the cold relationship between them in later scenes as well. An event which should spark the deepest emotion in a father stirs nothing within him whatsoever and hints again at the danger of society becoming emotionally cut off by placing all its focus and ideals on technology and power.

The third and ultimately the greatest change in the play was the revelation of Adam's clockwork heart. Apart from driving the story the clockwork heart serves two main functions in the play. Firstly it is characterised by limited time, which makes it no different to biological heart. Just as Adam's clockwork heart needs to be wound up from time to time, we as individuals have our health decline as we grow older which in turn calls for more frequent medical check-ups and treatments to get our bodies and minds back on track; after all we are mortal. The idea of birth also brought me back to the birth of the hermaphroditic child of Sol and Luna.

Within alchemy this child is perfect. It is the perfect balance of passion and reason and can thus transcend the mortal realm. Relating this to my writing and the work I thought of Adam in the same way. Although flawed, to me as writer this made him perfect. It made him human. And being mortal would mean that he would have a greater appreciation for life; more so than the other characters in the play. Relating it back to my own life by using, The Principle of Correspondence, I also thought of my brother whose flawed heart didn't even award him a month of life. I thought about the unpredictability

of the human condition and how it would feel the need for change within Transhumanists supporters and even my parents.

Though it might not always be an emotional pursuit, what it did help me theorise was their view of the human condition. If science and technology are built on the premise of progress and improvement, than anything else can surely be considered primitive? If many are aiming towards becoming the perfect machines, then what more is today's person but a flawed flesh crafted machine with a limited life span? In the play Adam is nothing more but the modern individual born in the future; a future that frowns on mortality, nature, balance, and contentment. Apart from adding the heart as an inciting incident the audience needed to glimpse an element which could lead to a possible problem later in the story.

Though the reality of the clockwork heart should already have raised the theme of disability and primitivism, I wished for danger to rear its head ever so slightly. To do this I wanted Adam's heart to wind down straight after his birth giving rise to a brief crisis of life and death. It is not uncommon for children to be born with underdeveloped hearts as was the case with my twin brother. Inspired by the limitations of the Adam's heart and family history I wanted him to face the possibility of death early on and plant the seed within the minds of the audience. The seed of 'the Principle of Cause and Effect'. We are born as mortals and thus we are automatically vulnerable to death and sickness. We need not scorn ourselves for it by calling ourselves flawed.

After saving the child this was the perfect time to reveal the Priest's increasing interest in the flawed protagonist. Apart from examining him and mauling his condition over in his head I decided to emphasise it by having the Priest glance back at the child in the middle of his exit. This brought with it the notion that if he weren't to examine the boy now he knew he would see him again.

Scene Two: The Mother

Opening the scene with the animated footage of the seed being planted was done to build upon the alchemical and biblical Tree of Life reference used in the Genesis logo as well as in the later dream sequence which featured in the draft. I wanted the audience to equate Adam's birth with the planting of a seed which could lead to something greater, but whether it is a complication or a solution was yet to be seen. The seed and the growth thereof also stood in contrast with Genesis' use of the symbols.

Although they marketed their products under the theme of natural progression, compared to nature's methods and results, as well as that of the alchemists' methods, humanity's scientific progress does little to maintain the same natural balance. It does not always keep in mind the underlying connection and interdependence between life forms on earth the way alchemists and writers do, it has little time for emotional consideration and for this reason I was drawn to the female figure.

The use of the woman was also a reference to Mother Nature and the sympathetic Luna (Mercury). Just as she nurtures every aspect of nature she is also what the ideal parent should be. Loving but trusting in the capabilities of every organism inhabiting her realm. Having her walk away and the audience never seeing her face adds a mystery to the character and the theme, one which would immediately be contrasted with Adam's mother - who faces the audience directly. She is hard at work and fully engaged with the technology and data flashing before her eyes. I'll admit that much of the need for mystery came from my own drowning experience and relating the water to a mysterious mother figure which cradled me whilst I was in trouble. In a way this was me giving a humanistic form to the experience I had as a child.

In comparison with the woman in the video Adam's biological mother is cold and stirs no heartfelt emotion and wonder within us whatsoever. Within this scene we are visually presented with The Principle of Polarity. Though both women are part of the same concept (motherhood and nurturers) they are on opposite end of the spectrum. This creates indirect conflict. Although the two characters never interact, Adam, being the vector between them, raises enough questions about them and of what will become of him. It's when Adam starts to cry that this disconnectedness is truly emphasised.

Although we see the mother, I wanted the audience to experience the surroundings through her for a brief moment. Instead of having Adam's cries confront us at full volume I wanted it to be heard through her distracted ears. In many ways through the same distracted ears I had before I started forcing myself to be present through meditation and through the writing exercises.

We can all recall an incident where we have been so lost in thought or immersed in an activity that we fail to notice that we are being spoken to. This is precisely what I wanted to play on. We hear Adam's cries trying to pierce the thick clouds of thought in his mother. The third time proves to be successful, but instead of embodying the caring attitude of Mother Nature or Luna, Adam's mother reacts coldly and uses the only means she knows to distract an annoying child, technology.

This comes back to the theme of tech neglect discussed earlier. For the first time we see Adam after the birth but now the mother vanishes. The aim was to create the idea that Adam had no place in her

space and that according to her Adam might as well be miles away instead of in the same room. This visually highlights the emotional gap between her and the child. The next sequence had not changed much from the draft, apart from the fact that it now used Mother Nature instead of the Angel, and that instead of placing the baby back before the parents would notice, the woman takes her time staring at the cold mother who would rather run to still the cries of her phone than those of her child.

Adam is carried into the heart of the tree, a tree which symbolises the potential to which he as seed might grow and eventually die. We however can question whether or not Adam will reach this potential whilst being in the care of neglecting new age parents as opposed to the caring ‘primitive’ parent holding him now. Our questions are soon answered when Adam is placed back and is ignored whilst his cries fade into silence.

Scene Three: Punishment and Deception

Adam is older and having fun in a solo game of football. Whereas before I had him dribbling the ball in-between and around the pillars, the décor had been changed to have the columns tower above the audience and performers creating a roman court / arena feel. If we bear in mind what has been said about all things being interconnected on the same level and the alchemist and writer having to observe his world on this equal level, then the seating placement with the court-like set design already highlights a societal flaw before any action really takes place. We look down on others as if we have already ascended into a higher plane of existence and that we now have the right to judge others as a way of ‘improving’ the world.

The logos of Apple, Google, Transhumanist Party, IBM, Microsoft, Darpa were added to the columns and represent companies and organisations conducting a great deal of the research and experiments which are fuelling Transhumanism as well as the marketing thereof. The faces at the top of these pillars are meant to show that although these great companies seem like entities they are driven by people. It also creates the illusion of the audience and performers being watched by these capitalistic leaders of industry, especially Adam.

I needed Adam to start developing a grudge against his disability and as the heart is part of the cardiovascular system having him place strain on his heart through his game seemed fitting. To make it worse I decided to make use of a trend seen so often on television. We are no strangers to seeing famous sportsmen and women being used to promote brands, whether it be fast foods, clothing or sporting equipment and usually it proves effective due to the fact that we idolise these individuals – even if they are caught cheating or just selling out to capitalism.

Having Adam watch this pro football player is meant to inspire him to push harder, but only ends in disappointment as he does not possess the equipment owned by the athlete. In his frustration Adam fails to notice and kicks a symbol which is sacred to Technologists, thus showing disrespect against the system. We can equate this to blasphemy, which is most a grave sin in most religions and punishable by death in various nations. Having by now gotten use to the idea of alchemy and writing being arts which set out to challenge the self and even false concepts of the world, I was inspired and driven to show how our modern world often lacks the desire to move against the stream; and even if we did so, we would be punished by those who believe blindly in what is being preached by the media and by capitalism.

Just as before, Adam's punishment is not only a comment on the unfairness of ancient and modern repercussions for going against a belief system, but also comments on the faithful followers and how far they are willing to go to stay faithful. Playing on the biblical tale of Abraham and Isaac, the priest pushes the father as follower to test his faith. Unlike Abraham, Adam's father feels no remorse or guilt and for this Adam suffers greatly.

We can also relate it to the image of the alchemical king devouring the prince in his court; becoming nothing more than a cannibalistic animal wishing to satisfy his hunger. I felt that the scene within the draft only touched on what could have been expanded more. The punishment created the perfect opportunity to go back to a theme which had been raised earlier and which we hear about quite often – the relationship between technology and youth.

I have mentioned before that children and teens often retreat to technology as a safe haven and as a techno parent when they feel threatened or neglected by others. The scene offered the perfect opportunity for the Priest to draw in a potential devotee and to expose one of his roles within the story – indoctrinating Adam. He offers a way out of pain by means of the technology, like a puffer offering gold to a beggar, giving Adam a tool which could freeze the outside world and provide a haven. But not only does it provide a haven but it opens up a gateway to communicating with others and receiving attention and affection which he had not received from his parents. Like the Pied Piper, the priest leads Adam away to reveal to him the world enjoyed by his peers.

Scene Four: Closed Network

Adam is lead into the space by the Priest this time and not the mother and instead of being abandoned the priest encourages him to join in with the young scholars who are occupied in their technological network. From here the scene remains unchanged until it reaches the point where Adam is knocked

down and mocked because of his disability. It all becomes too much for him and his heart starts to wind down to a stop.

Looking again at the symbolic meaning of the ouroboros as a cycle of life and death, as a journey which always comes full circle, I questioned whether this could be interpreted in a negative way as well. Surely it would be by some who would view death and mortality as a bad thing. Adam becomes the perfect specimen for playing with this ideology. We know now that his heart will keep being a crisis which comes around full circle to haunt him. If Adam ever decided to change himself and follow the new age philosophy it would ultimately be now. The fact that the priest saves him also creates a bond of trust between the two characters, one that the priest is more than willing to exploit. He does so by giving him a card with the Genesis Logo, putting out bait which would later pay off.

Even though technology is a safe haven for many, it is also an element which many individuals are judged on especially during childhood and teenage years. Not owning or being able to keep up with the latest technology or social networks creates the impression that one is 'behind', 'primitive' or lacking a certain social skill - again being on a lower level than one's 'godly' peers who seemingly exist within the higher plane if we think about it in alchemical terms; especially if we go back to the Tabula Smaragdina. The media and corporations take advantage of this, much like the priest, knowing that their target market is vulnerable and can easily be manipulated into following trends which cost more than they are worth.

Jung's work on the collective consciousness inspired much of the scene. It raised the question of how our current standing with technology and with the media affects the idea of interconnectedness and whether we are truly as connected as we think we are or whether it is all just a superficial connection which is cutting us off physically and spiritually.

Scene Seven Part 1: Redemption's Door

For the sake of clarity as to why Adam ends up at Genesis and also for a smoother transition between scenes, I changed the first introduction to have Adam enter the Genesis Corporation holding the card in his hand instead of just being seated from the start. I was happy with the assessment done on Adam but thought it more appropriate to change Eve's dialogue to seem more robotic, much like the impersonal and recorded voice-over heard when one is prompted to leave a message over the phone. I shortened most of the sentences and went about grouping each subject so that it is first mentioned before the information is conveyed in a short and simple manner.

Naturally, much of her Mission and Vision dialogue needed to be altered; firstly by shortening the speech which previously seemed too drawn out and secondly to remind the audience of their role as a

mechanical augmentations manufacturer and biotechnology corporation. This would mean that Adam's absence of physical augmentations could pose a problem in a system which prides itself on developing and implementing such technology and creating better humans.

Whereas Adam is not only a potential danger due to possessing natural human emotions, he is also regarded disabled and physically inferior to his co-workers, which is a complete contradiction to the hermaphroditic child in the alchemy. I wanted Eve to state this outright. Her statement would also be tested in the work environment - which compared to the draft was altered to seem less linear, but also to give a modern take on the factory scene in Chaplin's *Modern Times*.

Whereas the Chaplin scene only depicted the production of hardware and a single task per person, I wanted Techmata's assembly process to include the manufacturing of software and chips; without which modern hardware cannot function. To make matters more difficult and to display the need for employees to possess a multitude of skills in the modern workplace, I wanted Adam and his co-workers to switch between uncomplicated 'hammer and nail' construction, software programming and delicate engineering at machine-like pace.

The inability to keep up would also provide the opportunity for another problem to arise. With the physical and mental stress to which Adam is exposed it's only natural that his heart and mind take strain, which they do and eventually ends with Adam's body giving in to the pressure. To avoid the repetitiveness of his failing heart and also to add a twist to the story I wanted something in Adam's heart give way making it impossible for it to be wound up again. This would also give the priest his desired opportunity to take advantage of Adam and lure him into his circle of followers. Seeing as though the engineers were present in the room and that a piece of 'primitive hardware' had just faltered, I allowed them the opportunity to try and fix it - with devastating effects.

Scene Eight: A Mistake?

Thinking the image of the father-king devouring his son, and of the idea of tech neglect, I wondered how this tied to the idea of betrayal. Whereas I can relate back to my father and the liquid mother, I can recall that they aided me when I was at my weakest. Surely for someone in Adam's position it would then be a shock when he starts to doubt the sincerity of this new father-like figure? Whereas previously his collapse landed him straight in the hospital bed and moved into the dream sequence, I felt that a hint at his doubts should first be given and that this would be the perfect opportunity for Adam to assess the damage and develop mistrust for the system and its overseer. The scene then starts with the brief nightmare of Adam trying to escape down a long dark hall, much like the footage of the school hall.

When he awakes and discovers that the mechanism is broken, the hatred towards his disability reaches new heights and we see a very emotional, very human reaction from Adam as he lashes out at his environment. To push it further I wanted him to lash out once more at an individual and show that not even his declining health is enough to stop the outpour of natural emotion; an emotion aroused by betrayal of trust.

On an alchemical level, Adam is completely out of balance, leaning towards Luna, but using the fire of Sol to act out and indirectly also burn himself out, like the metal being exposed to too much heat - thus comes the lunge and pinning of the holy man against the altar which he so idolises. This image was largely inspired by the Abraham and Isaac story with the idea of ‘what if’ Isaac revolted against his faithful father and sacrificed him in the heat of rage? Adam has the opportunity to sacrifice his curious desire and pull towards Technotology but he chooses not to, knowing that the priest might just be his only hope and that it would be morally wrong. It does not bring back the trust though, not even as Adam is lifted onto the bed and prepped for surgery.

I recalled Hauck mentioning how pain usually inspires the individual to undertake the Opus and how Jung used it as a starting point for patients to delve into the metaphorical darkness of the unconscious (How the Alchemists Achieved Their Transformations, 2011). This would be the premise on which I would base Adam’s dream journey. With Adam being put to sleep the questions and doubts in his mind as to whether he made the right decision has now finally been forced to the forefront through a dream vehicle.

Adam escapes the tunnel and discovers the tree in the clearing, himself as the seed grown into an adult, his natural state depicted in alchemical symbolism. When he harvests the fruit of his decision he is presented with a possible forewarning: the path he is on is unnatural and a denial of himself as human and as one with nature. The tree of knowledge has left him wanting not because it is sinful but because he and the rest of humanity aren’t wise or empathetic enough to wield it.

This lack of morality and wisdom is displayed by war which befalls the garden. Like so many others Adam is unable to escape and his life is taken due to the greed and selfishness of mankind and those in power. The operation fails, mirroring the tragic events in the dream and leaving the priest smiling as he most likely predicted the failure from the start.

Scene Nine: Watching the Weak

The opening of the scene was largely inspired by the warning from the Tibetan Book of the Dead. Like the material being exposed to too much heat too quickly, after delving into the unconscious, Adam is physically and mentally worn. He maintains this unresponsive state until he is forced out of it by the patient seated across from him. Again the augmented patient staring at Adam embodies the final result of the System's 'progress' – another faulty 'cog' spit out due to being worn by the fast paced, high demanding lifestyle which it and the corporations force upon society, and also by reflecting upon the unconscious myths which may just drive us insane..

What is seen in him is the possibility that the promise made by the heads of bio-, nano-, communications and information technology (to eradicate disability and human biological limitations) might not be realised when we take into account what effect it's already had in the hands of morally stunted mankind (increasing rates in depression, global warming, advanced warfare, food riddled with hormones and oxytocin, obesity, etc.)

The use of the keyboard to communicate was kept as I still wanted to rid the characters of their voices and restrict the verbal communication to televisions and speakers. This is also the first and the only time that this would occur as I had decided to do away with the office scene where Adam and his co-workers are engaged in a chat site argument. The said scene served no real purpose in the draft and would not fit into the story as it currently stood. With Adam at his most vulnerable and boxed in with little options it was the perfect opportunity to bring in the Priest once more.

Though Adam attempted to escape the chances of him succeeding in his state would be slim. He stops, fuelled by his desire to end any and all relations with the priest who has caused him nothing but pain. This was the perfect time to raise the stakes and have the priest, the puffer, provide him with a cure for his disability. With Adam at his wits' end we see him becoming desperate and increasingly confused, making us wonder if he would be willing to trust the man one last time during this life and death predicament. I wanted the scene to end with this question being left unanswered; a cliff-hanger of sorts leading into scene ten.

Scene Ten: Rebirth Ritual

I had been inspired by the hermaphroditic child, as well as by the stories of Abraham and Isaac and of the father-king and his son. I wondered what would happen 'if' these two ideas, one of betrayed sacrifice and the other of rebirth were placed together. Would it then still be a rebirth into a pure state, or a false state - the puffer's version of the hermaphrodite? The story reaches a climax as Adam is faced with the ultimate decision. His presence at the Technotology ritual indicates that he has

decided to undergo the operation, but we sense uncertainty within him. Adam starts hesitating as he watches the devotees who are void of all emotion and respond like puppets to each order and movement made by the priest.

Seeing the heart makes his decision all that much harder. However, seeing the altar, surgical team and the results of the sacrifice which make out the mechanical devotees makes Adam turn down the priest's offer. Unfortunately in our world as well as Adam's, rejecting the mainstream fixation on science and technology is not without its cost, whether it be being ridiculed, the reality sacrificing a 'convenient' life or even the possibility of confronting death. Staying with the metaphor of religion and ritual which demand sacrifice, Adam is refused ownership of his life if not dedicated to the almighty system.

The question of whether this is a pure rebirth is answered when the puffer's turn on him, betraying him yet again. There is no hermaphroditic rebirth here because the ritual is fuelled by ego, not true sacrifice for the sake of self-revelation, nor for the sake of using the newly acquired knowledge to bring about beneficial change. Although his heart also betrays him, it is a natural and an unselfish result of The Principle of Cause and Effect.

Caught between a rock and a hard place Adam uses the system against itself and stops the mechanical devotees in the same manner with which the priest froze his father. With the system temporarily crippled, Adam has the opportunity to turn it off completely. This would surely mean death for Adam and he knows it.

I wanted to reassure him and for him to believe that it wasn't in vain. Thus came the idea of showing Adam sharing in the joys of being human. He shares the fruit with Mother Nature a metaphor for the selfless sharing of knowledge and resources, unlike the system which currently controlled Adam and the others. This was a way for me to emphasise the theme that the wielding of knowledge and advanced technologies requires the cultivation of a selfless and moral society to cease its misuse now and in the future. We cannot force ourselves to be more than human because we are already failing at being human, at being moral, at being selfless.

With this knowledge Adam is finally at peace with his decision to end the madness and come to grips with his humanity. I desired to confront the audience with the same choice and display footage of themselves and others hiding behind their deceptive devices and failing to engage with their fellow humans, their environment and themselves. The point is made, the system crashes and we see Adam pass a morally and emotionally intact individual.

4.8.2 Play conclusion

However, although Adam is intact emotionally does not mean that he is perfect. From the start of the play an individual is seen who is moving between the plains of Sole and Luna, emotion and rationality, to come to grips with who he is amidst this world of 'perfection'. What I tried to show was not only how Adam is suffering physically (due to his heart and the bullying), but also how he suffers mentally to discover his true self. In essence this is then a performance becomes an allegory of the Magnum Opus process.

It becomes the journey of the prime matter, which is the physically and emotionally flawed product. Within the performance Adam as product is burnt in the fire of painful rejection (calcination), plunged into the depths of his own emotions (dissolution), marginalised by his fellow humans (Separation), recombined into a state of scepticism (conjunction), left to wander in thought within a mental hospital (fermentation), exposed to the final suffering to discover the true meaning of life (distillation), and finally, is raised to a state of full awareness and understanding of the self (Coagulation).

Although the play follows this process, I state again that it is not perfect; neither should it be set in stone. Keeping to the essence of post-dramatic theatre, the steps merely give an indication of what thematic line should be followed. How the performers wish to change the events or characters during the experimental phase is ultimately their decision (Scott, 2011: 44). Ultimately the goal is for the audience to question their relationship with technology as well as the modern concept of the 'perfect human being'.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The study set out to explore the use of the alchemical Magnum Opus as a creative writing guide to both prospective and skilled writers. The affordability and availability of writing has made it a popular form of expression but one that is so often met with fear due to individuals lacking an effective framework or confidence to guide their planning and writing. The goal of this study, by means of experimentation, was to answer the following questions:

1. How can the alchemical Magnum Opus serve as both an effective and easy creative writer's guideline?
2. Is the seven step guideline flexible enough to ensure that the writer can adapt it to their individual needs and style?

To understand the Opus, chapter two explored the greater tradition of Alchemy which encompasses its history as well as the philosophies around which its practices and symbolism is built. What the research revealed early on was that the grasping of alchemy as a tradition is dependent on the individual's grasping of the base principles of a much larger system, namely Hermeticism. Hermeticism in its history has held close relations to the art of writing due to the fact that the belief was based around the synchronisation of two ancient gods of writing and magic, Thoth and Hermes, into a single figure known as Hermes Trismegistus.

Although the Magnum Opus forms the main practice for the alchemical goal of transmutation and the crafting of the philosopher's stone, the writer cannot risk engaging in the Opus without first gaining insight into the principles of Mentalism, Correspondence, Vibration, Polarity, Rhythm, Cause and Effect, and Gender. While being neither laws nor rules, these principles form the very essence of each of the seven steps of the Opus and can be applied effectively to the art of writing as well. Though the relation between the principles and writing might not always seem too obvious, when delving into study one cannot deny that story and characters are built upon the elements which are cause and effect, and give rise to rhythm which keeps the audience / reader entertained and carries the narrative.

What the study revealed is that the principles not only prove how all matter, including the practitioner's work – whether physical, mental or psychological - is connected, but why it is connected. Though this might be common knowledge to the more experienced playwright, the principles offer a guide as to what work and mental ethic becomes required to take up the practice. In other words, what it proves to the prospective writer is that their physical actions, (journaling and exercises), and mental actions (letting go of preconceptions and staying ego-less and focused) directly

affect not only the emotional truth of the themes and events within the story, but also how the public will receive it physically and mentally.

On a personal level, I set out to use the exercises and the journaling as tools to help me gain new creativity. Throughout my experimentation I was made aware each time how these tools did not add any creativity, but merely made room for the growth or expansion of creativity by helping me silence my thoughts, including the inner critic.

This confrontation with the inner critic allowed me to become aware of many false beliefs which I had accumulated over the years and which had hindered my ability to express myself in writing and acting. I had succeeded in challenging my ego numerous and in developing more confidence in writing by repeatedly challenging my myths about needing to be perfect and serious all the time. It should be made clear though that these thoughts never subsided for long, but that the purging of them is a process which needs to be done throughout the experiment. When relating it to alchemy it becomes clear that this is a normal practice as even the alchemist must frequently go back to previous steps in the Opus to perfect it, and also meditate on the practice.

Through this study I can truthfully confirm Gaylene Perry's statement that artistic research and the created work do take on autobiographical traces of the practitioner. During my research this came in the form of the mother figure that I had found whilst drowning, my twin brother taking the form of Adam, and my time with my au pair students leading me to the theme of transhumanism. However, the autobiographical and self-reflective nature of the study and of the practice-led methodology did reveal to me one of the biggest challenges, which I was not as obviously aware of before; the task of balancing subjectivity and objectivity.

As I had to state a few times within the paper, many statements made during my research and writing of the play were strongly subjective. However, through the Opus's emphasis on the sacred marriage of Sol and Luna, as well as through the journaling required by the PaR methodology I was able to identify, record, and reflect on these moments more clearly. Through identification I could become aware of my own preconceptions and stop myself from becoming too self-indulgent. This allowed me to compare it to the reality outside of my own life and determine what similarities they share and in turn make my work more objective.

I say more objective, because subjectivity will always be present, and although the sacred marriage can happen during the process, it is a challenge which one constantly has to return to, just as I had to when I felt sympathetic towards the character, Adam. The nature of alchemy and writing is similar in its requirement of the practitioner to move back and forth between steps, to work and rework the materials for the sake of improving the work, but also the method used, to create a product which is as

close to perfection as possible (wherein the message within the play synchronised with the reality of the world and which is not weighed down by personal illusions or ego.

Returning to the question of reality, the Opus helped me better realize that reality influences story just as much as story influences reality. In effect, if there exists falseness in either the writer's physical or mental approach it will reveal itself within the story. These principles extend themselves to the characters, setting and actions of the story as well when argued that the principles of Cause and Effect, Rhythm, and Polarity, form the basis of plot and premise. Therefore the writer has a three-fold job: 1. They must ensure that their relationship with their surroundings remains ego-less, yet focused, as it is ultimately from the surroundings that they draw inspiration. 2. They must ensure that their relationship with the work stays ego-less and focused or have the story suffer under their negligence. 3. They must ensure that the story dynamics adhere to the principles or risk an unbalance between the characters, their actions, the setting, and ultimately the plot. Ego often takes the form of sympathy as we become too precious about our creations and refuse to change them. Within the study I reached that point after the draft of "techmata". I knew that the story was flat and needed to reassess my priorities.

If the world does not take sympathy on those who suffer, then I could not reflect this reality by over-sympathizing with what I had created. I thus had to remove myself, my ego from the work to make room for the connection between the social reality and the reality within the story. When two of the three requirements were met the third, pertaining to rhythm and cause-and-effect in narrative, started falling into place. The removal of ego, of sympathy, now introduced risk which introduced drive / rhythm into Adam's narrative. Like all of us he too had something to lose now.

Apart from the three focus points, the tradition of alchemy raises another challenge, namely its symbolism. Though the writer need not grasp every pictorial symbol, the Opus' frequent reference to sulphur, mercury, salt, earth, the hermaphrodite child, the sacred marriage, as well as the One, requires that the individual possess the knowledge about what principles they represent. This is particularly true of sulphur and mercury due to the fact that the balance between rationality and emotionality govern most of the steps within the Opus. Inadequate knowledge risks not only confusion on the writer's part but the incorrect implementation of both the Hermetic principles and the seven steps of the Opus.

What chapter three and four revealed was that neither of the two practices house certainty. Though the two traditions are able to complement each other, the writer still faces the reality of trial and error, and as my return to separation in section 4.4 revealed, the framework of the Opus cannot prevent the writer from possessing insufficient and inadequate knowledge on the chosen topic. What this proves is that although the Opus can provide a framework by means of its steps, it is ultimately the writer who decides what exercises, research methods and planning methods they implement in each of them.

Within my personal study the lack of certainty was not the greatest hindrance, due to the fact that the play leaned more towards post-dramatic theatre. This means that even if the play worked on paper, it might not work on stage as it has not been tested. In the essence of post-dramatic theatre, this uncertainty is a welcomed characteristic as it allows for continuous growth in story, no matter how much time changes. Yet this also answers the second research question regarding flexibility. Though it is true that the Opus allows for the writer to implement their personal style within each of the steps it also removes any safety net that they might wish for. A preferential decision thus has the potential to create flaws in the steps which could result in a flawed method or product.

On the positive side and also contrary to the notion that writing systems inhibit the creative writer, what the study proves is that the Opus instead of being the perfect writing system, can serve as a rough guideline. It has the potential to encourage healthy mental and physical focus, preparation, and an objective relation to the work, the self, and the surroundings from which the writer draws inspiration. As a rough guideline it is able to point out opportunities for different stages of experimentation and provide inspiration through its cryptic visual and verbal symbolism, but lacks specifics. The latter, while desired by some who want freedom, might prove to be vague to others, as is natural to any art form.

When one considers writing for theatre and also that the text is more or less a fuse for the final performance, it becomes clear that the Opus does seem like a promising method for creating work due to its flexibility. I mentioned before that *Techmata* leaned more towards post-dramatic theatre, a style which does not limit itself to the text but rather embraces experimentation. In reality however, all plays and genres require some degree of stage and text experimentation as no text is cut-and-paste ready for the stage. With the Opus being flexible and its steps rich with symbolism, it would be possible make the process a two-fold one; that is to say, creating the text via the seven steps, placing it on stage via the same method, and changing both the textual and physical aspects as the two become synchronised. In theory, one could then start by:

Burning the text through on-stage experimentation to see what will and won't work when performing it, studying the performance to see what emotional aesthetic is created and how it will be perceived, separating or changing any physical elements which might be hindering the desired aesthetic, recombining the performance on and within the text to something which is practical yet effective in conveying theme, letting the play ferment by stepping away from the rehearsals and writing for a short period of time for new ideas to grow, distilling the ideas to determine what would work within the performance, and finally coagulating it into a final text and performance piece.

Of course this theory of dual text and performance experimentation can only be studied via physical experimentation. It is to be remembered that the Hermetic principles can also be applied to the physical performance when one considers how it relates to the audience. Any action in either the play

or in the audience will have some degree of effect in the space. This has the potential of altering the level of communication (vibration) between the performers and their audience, which could speed up or decrease the rhythm of the staged events as well.

Again however, the role of each of these Hermetic can only be fully explored through physical experimentation. Whereas this paper focused solely on the relationship between the writer and the text it raises the potential for future research into its effectiveness within a theatre troupe as well as in writing workshops. Writing workshops, much like theatre require flexibility to make room for various individual styles. In this regard the Magnum Opus as a guideline could prove to be an effective curriculum with which to guide a class as they better their skills in the craft of writing and staging alike. With literature being a hive for metaphors and symbols, the cryptic symbolism and esoteric philosophies of alchemy and Hermeticism, as history has proven, could raise various creative topics and themes within group discussions if future experiments were to be undertaken.

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Illustrations:

Fig. 1:

Charles Walker, 2013. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.topfotofeatures.com/2013/02/28/the-charles-walker-collection-of-paranormal> [2016, January 20].

Fig. 2:

Wikipedia, 2016. [Online]. Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_element [2015, May 28].

Fig. 3 - 5:

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Fig. 6:

Moran, B.,T. 2004. *Alchemy* [Online]. Available at: <http://ic.galegroup.com/ic/whic/ReferenceDetailsPage/ReferenceDetailsWindow?zid=fded76997a0715c9628ee51a4af5cde6&action=2&catId=GALE%7CAAA000070877&documentId=GALE%7CCX3404900029&userGroupName=san66643&jsid=a61525a58af41f95ec038e1080515c0a> [2015, 29 February].

Fig. 7:

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Fig. 8 – 9:

Katz, D., A. 1978. *An Illustrated History of Alchemy and Early chemistry* [Online]. Available at: www.chymist.com/History%20Alchemy.pdf [2015, January 28].

Fig. 10 – 11:

Hauck, D.,W. 2014. Searching for the Cosmic Quintessence: How Alchemists Meditated in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. *The Roise Croix Journal*, 10(1): 2 - 24.

Fig. 12 – 19:

Man. 21 December 2012 (video file) [Online]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfGMYdalCIU> [2015, September 18].

Fig. 20 - 28:

Cutts, S. 2016. *Illustration* [Online]. Available at: <http://www.stevecutts.com/illustration.html> [2015, September 18].

Fig. 29:

Wall-E (Film). 2008. Los Angeles: Walt Disney Pictures.

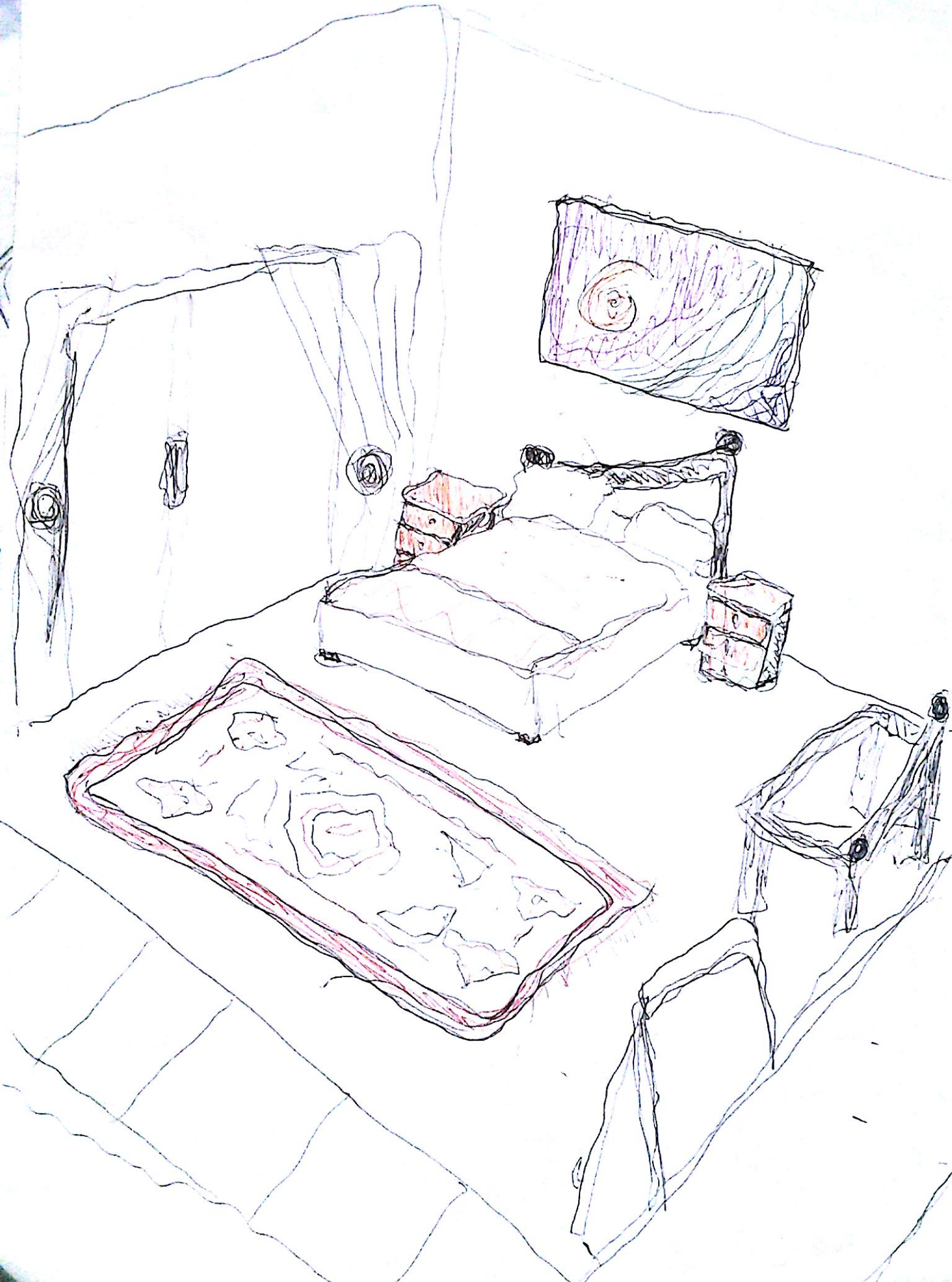
UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH

Addendum

MA Bdrum Thesis

Shaun Peters

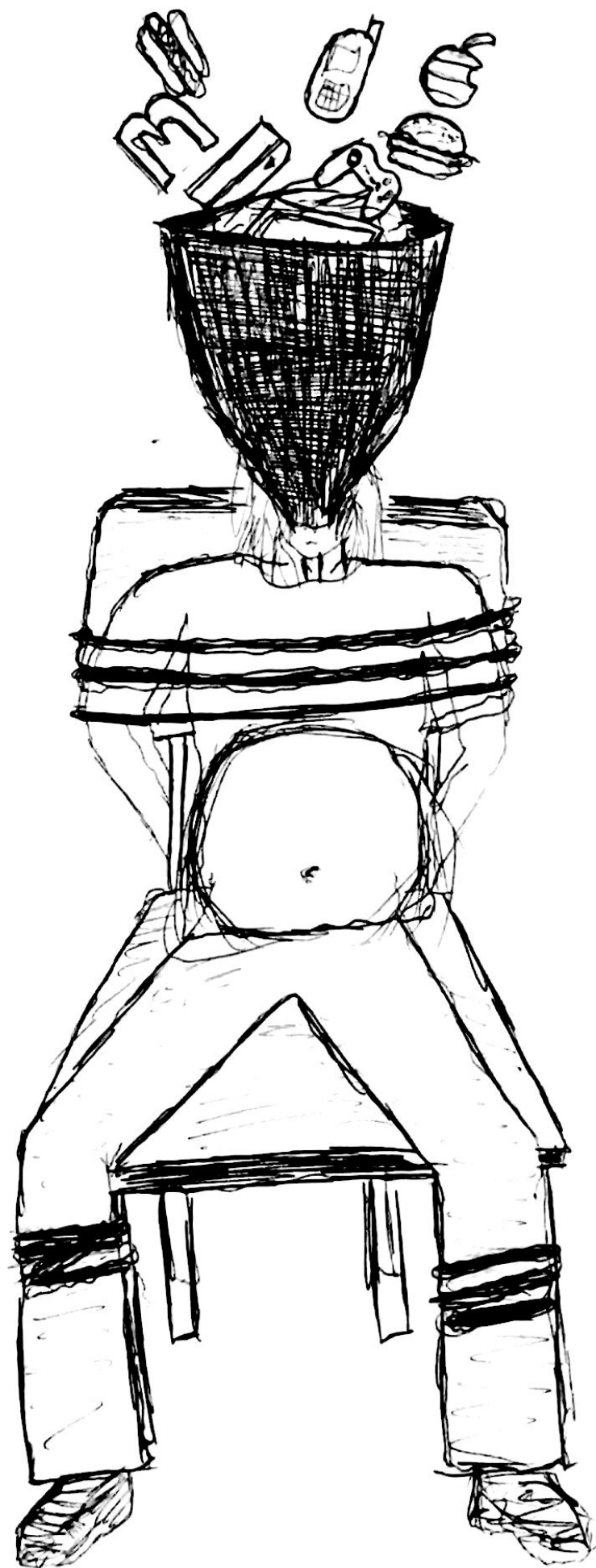
DOODLES AND MANDALAS

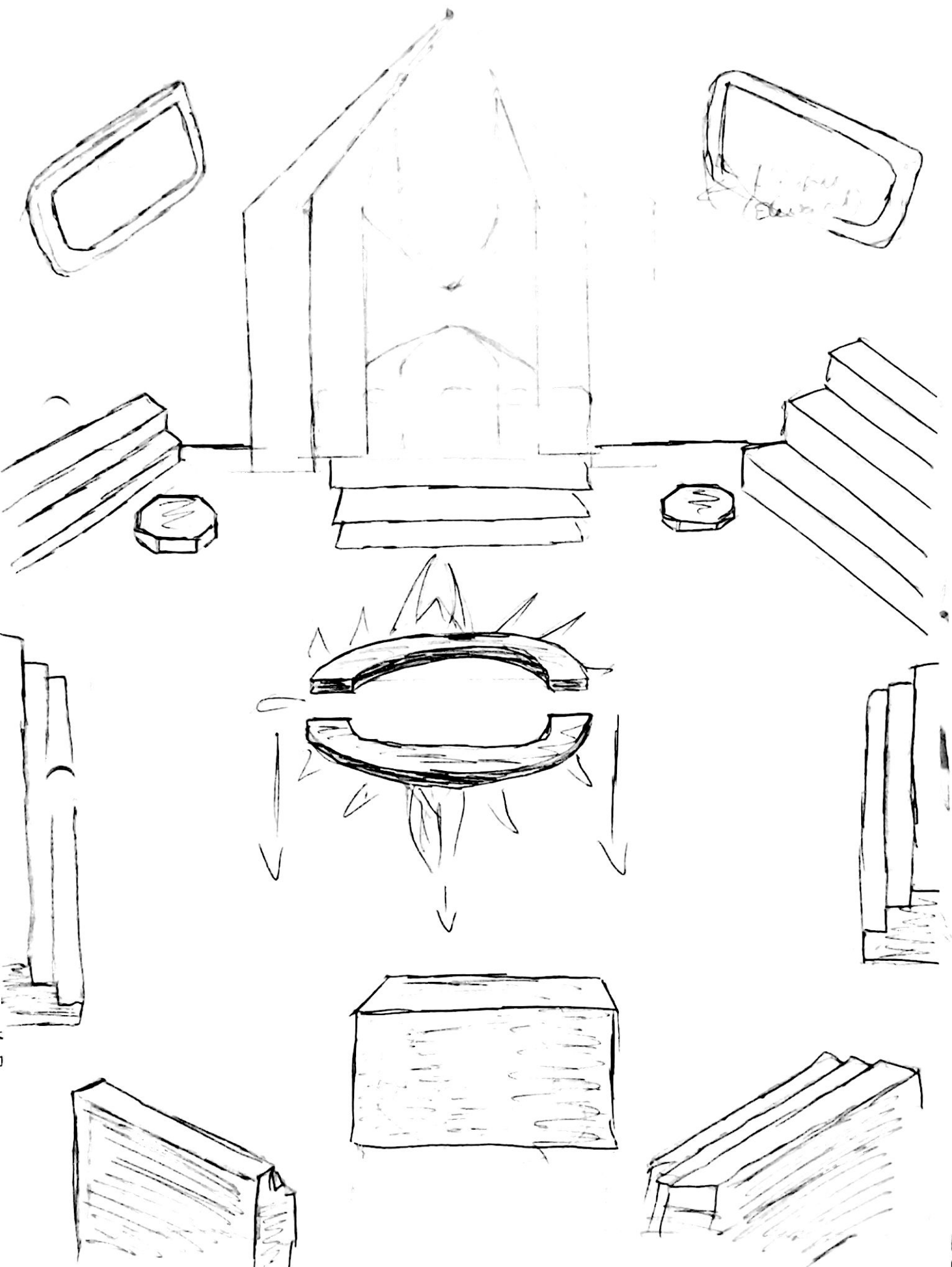


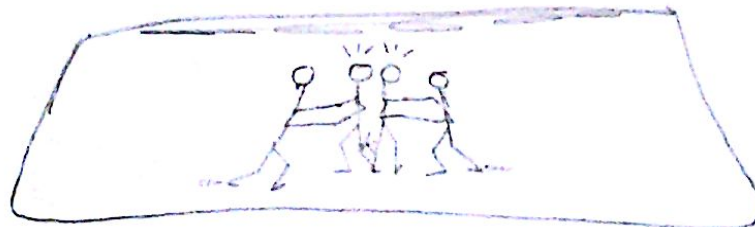
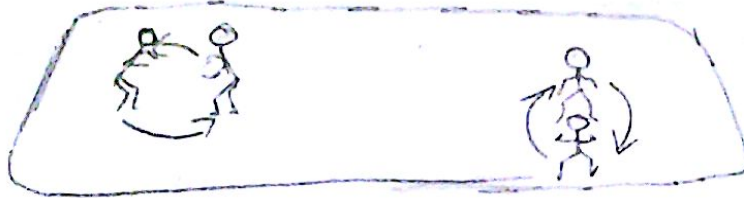
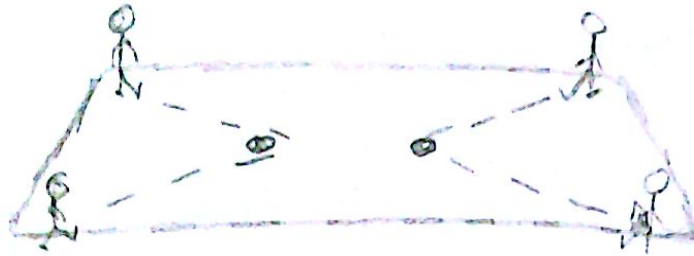
This is my father's bedroom at our house in Malcolm Street.

The bed frame & dressing mirror was custom made. It used to be my grandparents' bedroom before we moved in and I remember spending many nights lying with them while they read or we watched Tarzan.

One day while broasting a braai, my friend Gerhard and I were wrestling on the bed when I dove into the side railing trying to tackle him. I bleed a bit and to this day I still have the scar.

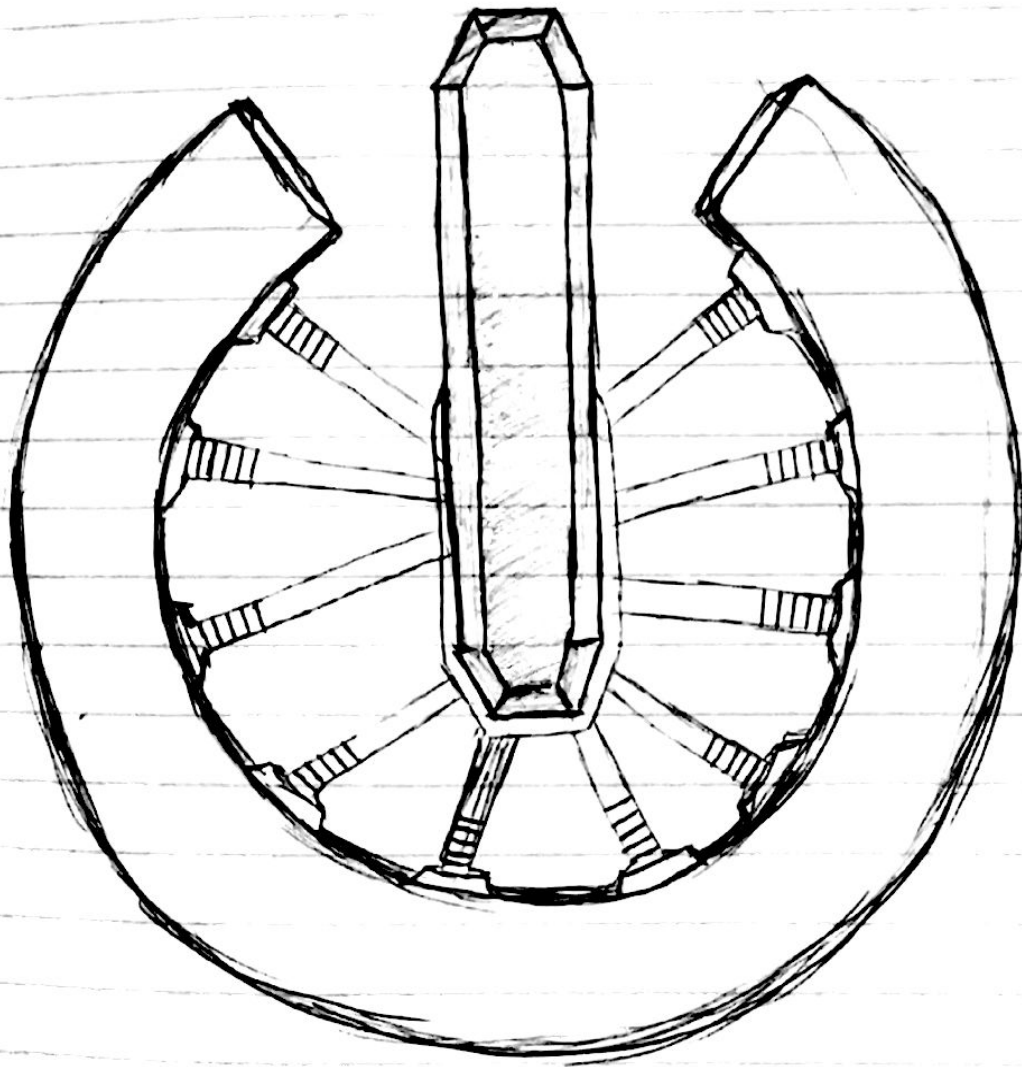






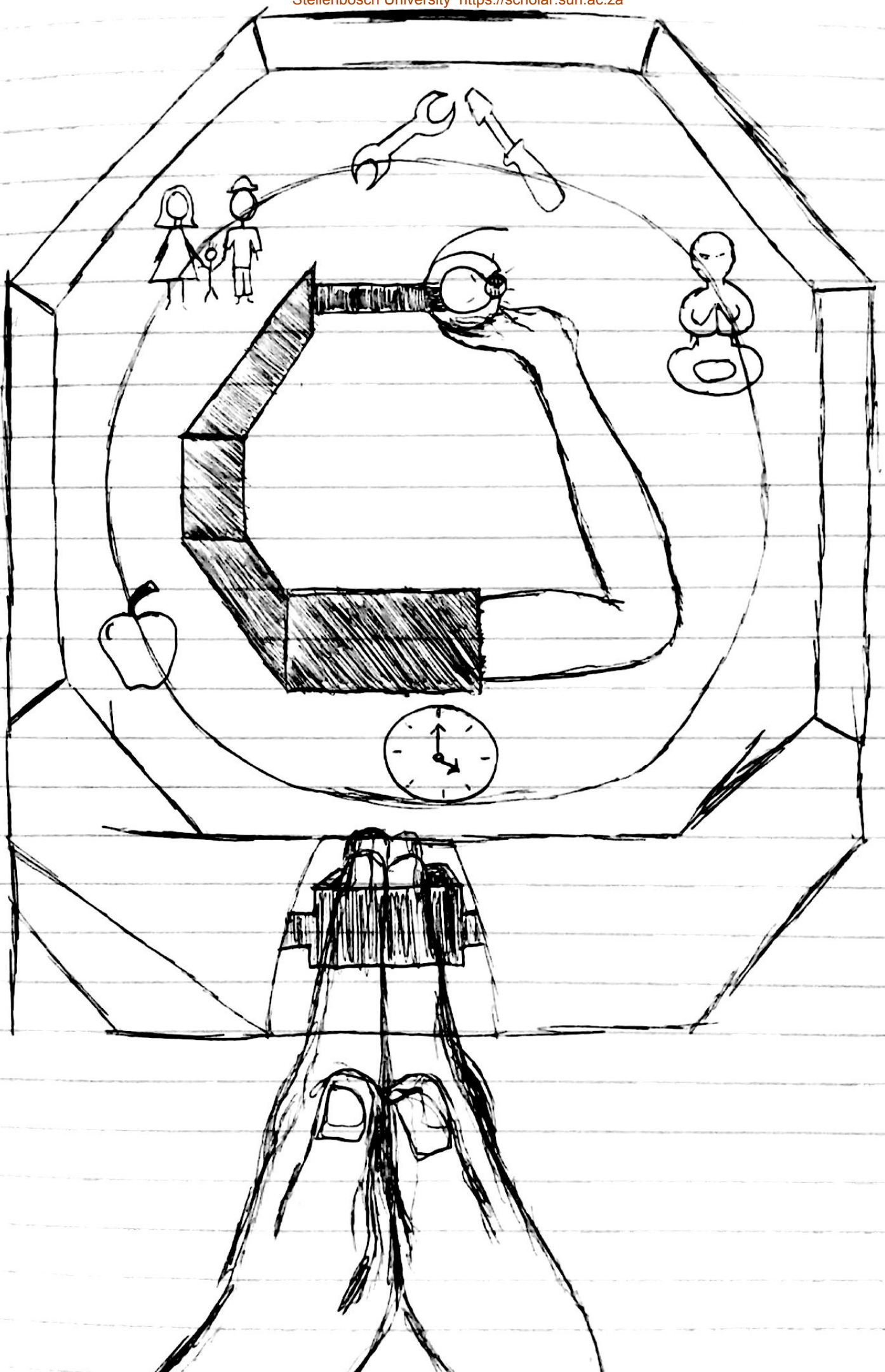


The device is shown on a screen
It looks like a real rectangular ruby with
a gold frame around it (on it are ports and lights)



Cerebis Heart





DELVING INTO THE INCONCIOUS

18/07

Paradox.

This world is both important and pointless. Our existence has both meaning & no meaning whatsoever.

If I followed Jung's advice I would not question it.

I would not force understanding upon myself. I would acknowledge the paradox as something beyond my understanding and let it go.

I must let go of wanting more. - Of wanting to know more in order to clarify my existence, in order to create a purpose for myself; in order to define myself.

Let nature take its course.

Be present.

Keep it simple. Stupidly simple
Live in the ~~flow~~ now; tomorrow
will dawn when it does. If

You need to know the answers
they will be shared with you
when you need them (whether
it be in this life or the next).

You cannot force events to happen.
You cannot force the answers to
come. Trying to do so is
to keep your eyes set on the
future and to stop yourself
from being present, from living
presence.

18/07

Strip away, Don't incorporate.
Don't try and incorporate the presence
present into your consciousness → It is
already there; you are already in
it.

Strip away the past & the future
and you will be present. Presence
will become felt.

Simple exercise: Stop whatever you
are doing and listen. What sounds
do you hear that you did not hear
before? What sounds did your
thoughts block out entirely?

Pay active attention to your surroundings
and you will be present. ONLY
your immediate surroundings.

19/07

To let go of ~~off~~ my attachment to the material world I would have to let go of my OCD, my need / obsession with perfection.

I would have to weigh ~~my~~ life. Fear or happiness?

I need to stop fearing the loss of control. Control is good, but so is chaos.

I cannot be the perfect person.
I cannot be the perfect worker
I cannot be the perfect officer
I cannot be the perfect son
I cannot be the perfect partner
I cannot be the perfect businessman
I cannot be the perfect human.

I don't want to be perfect.

I don't want to have the perfect work.

I don't want to have the perfect life.

I don't want the perfect hair.



I don't want to be the perfect person.
I don't want to be the perfect writer.
I don't want to be the perfect actor.
I don't want to be the perfect son.
I don't want to be the perfect partner.
I don't want to be the perfect businessman.

I just want to be content.

As writer.

As writer I cannot write for everyone.
Though I have a target audience
I cannot look over my shoulder and
fear their opinions on my work.

I cannot keep staring over my
own shoulder, playing backseat
writer, and judge myself like a
tyrant.

These habits will limit me
creatively. It will stop me from
losing control. It will stop me
from taking chances.

The most successful people are
insane. They take the chances others
are too shit scared to take; they

lose control and dismount their trains from the tracks. They are happier for it too.

We are chaos manifested. Beings so complex that none of the great minds have been able to wrap their minds around ^{us} ~~humans~~, around themselves.

Why then should our expressions be ~~order~~ ordered? It shouldn't. It cannot. If it were ~~the~~ it would not be expression, it would be custom, it would be illusion - It

Freewriting Exercise

Watching Wild Hogs which is undoubtedly one of my favourite films. It just perfectly captures the amount of fun there is to have in life, the reality that we need to be impulsive & take chances.

As a person this is something or some aspects which I have struggled with the most. Too caught up in routine, in my safe cocoon. I yearn for that excitement, that X-factor in life.

I keep telling myself that I'll meet someone that yanks me out of it, that will challenge my fear and reawaken the child in me; but is this really the answer.

It feels like I'd be doing what so many others do, make the same stupid mistake of thinking that someone else can complete me when it is my own responsibility. It must

make myself whole or risk dragging down any relationship under my weight.

Partying, eating, drinking, savouring every little bit of life out there and within me. The world is wide and my time is little. If I am to explore it I cannot afford to waste a second. I need to find the child in me the earnest, joy-filled, starry-eyed individual with dreams & an imagination big enough to fill the world three times over. I will find him but I must do it now; I cannot wait for certain events to pass first reasoning that I'll have more time afterwards. We are human and I am mortal, dying, each day, every second. I'll go out swinging.

Place Exercise

I can write: In the garden of Melcolm Spence
 house, At the back of Weerman & Brock,
 In the alley next to Aandklas, On
 the pavement next to the B Dram
 building, At the Cutlers' house, on
 my father's balcony in the Strand,
 next to the dam in Wekeworden,
 in ~~the~~ my grandmother's kitchen, in
 my other grandmother's living room,
 at the top of heenkop, at Jason's
 grave in Chapman's Peak, in the
 airport at Luderitz, on the plane
 over Namibia, at Anderson's camp,
 in the Damara land next in between
 the boulders, in Faalkaver's Market.
 In the small community theatre in Pearl,
 at Natis in Whk, at the old beach
 flat in Swakopmund, on the beaches
 of Langstrand, in the Oranje river, on top
 of Peter Grobler's Combi, in front of
 the fireplace in the Melcolm Spence flat.

On the roof of Manhattan Court.

Feeling

I can't write when I'm not motivated,
when I tell myself that I can't write,
when I'm feeling scared of picking up
the pen, when I feel sad for my
father, when I feel nervous about a
deadline, when I feel like a grown-up,
when I am alone and overthinking,
when I feel like a victim to my own
mind, when I feel rushed, when I
feel like I haven't accomplished
anything in my life, when I feel
too excited about something else,
when I feel cold, when I feel
uninspired, when I feel trapped in the
house, when I feel hungry, when
I feel like doing something different,
when I think of next year,
when I feel like passing three years.

Hearthoff.

Go To The Pine.

How does my story with Tech & conflict
fit into the societal story? 15

A child lives in the present. 22

A Journal delves into Unconscious 31

Creativity is in the earth 44

* Stages of Creativity 45 Ask questions.

* Stress Originality too much 45.

Face writing demons or be surprised by them 48

You cannot understand everything 54.

* Draw to feel

Eyes and ears open as I
sit and listen. In the back
I hear the humming, the
monotonous vibration of the
~~fridge~~ fridge against my eardrums.
Is it just that? The humming?
The dog jells by. Dog running,
running, running past the windows
and doors setting the wind into
a spin. Hyperactive. Hyperactive
superpower of a wonderdog,
The Wonderdog protecting the
farm. The window moves and
sounds tap-tap against my ear.
The blinds are playing tricks on
me. Cruel blinds, cruel fire,
cruel smoke all in the distance
on the mountain. It rages
and belows into mushrooms
of greyness. Mushrooms. I'm
hungry but if I eat wonderdog

will come begging again. Brown
 eyes staring ~~staring~~ sadly. Go
 do your job, guard and run.
 You make me feel guilty and
 awkward. Run out over the
 grass behind you. Flying
 past the house again zooooom.
 The K-9 action hero
 Wonderdog in Wonderdog and
 the burning wine farm.
 Stupid pen don't give me
 this. Ink flowing then
 gone. I must reach the
 finishline at least before
 you go, before the fire comes
 burning burning burning
 and burns the pages and
 the humming turns to crackle.
 Snap crackle pop wow when
 last have I tasted Rice Crispies
 or Rice Crispies and marshmallow
 cakes. Childhood treat with my

Reminds me of Invader Zim and Gir.
 Gir as the dog and Mini Moose running around
 the house. Gir or dog gets tired
 and fights no more. Mini Moose takes
 over battling the flames. Harder Harder
 finding water running around like the
 Flash. Mini Moose and the burning
 winefarm. Randomness the tiles feel
 cold now like ice. Ice going to melt
 under the fire which approaches.
 Here we go again. Stupid pen stupid
 writing want giving me uphill.
 I can't find another, can't stop; not
 now, must write write write write rub
 it seems, but it's fun. FUN like
 Wonderdog exhausted and passed out on
 the cold floor Perhaps I can see
 now and he won't know. He'll
 smell it, hear it, hear the fridge
 open and close, smell the cheese

PRINCIPLE OF CORRESPONDENCE

Reasons why I chose technology:

- * Allows me to connect/socialize within the safety of my own bubble.
- * It keeps me from having to face my own company.
- * It extends my influence on the world.
- * It provides me with knowledge & self-empowerment.
- * It helps me escape from current reality.
- * It helps me think less, or strain my imagination.
- * I seek to improve my health. Mental & physical.

- 01 Brains : self empowerment, escape.
- 02 Brawn : less thinking, comfort.
- 03 Mute : self empowerment, communication.
- 04 Rookie : rejection, nostalgia.

- EMPOWERMENT
- DISTRACTION
- SIMPLIFICATION

The baggage

Can you simply pack a backpack & go?
Why do we so willingly accept the technological
add-ons?

Why do we willingly subject ourselves to
experimentation?

Why do we ironically hanker to times of old
simple times, slower times.

The more we accept the sellers, the more we
add on, the faster it all becomes, the
more we lose touch with true identity.

I feel like a technological mael.

Like a mael I give no thought to why
I accept what is loaded onto me, but I
just do so bcs the times call for it.
To reject it is to be rejected, is to
be marginalized, is to be left behind,
is to result in starvation, judgment,
sickness and ultimately ~~DEATH~~ DEATH.

We chose death for fear of death.

Slave to the machine

- Myth of development.
- 'We owe it to the people.'
- Man as god, rulers of earth & their constructs.
- Destroying planet & ourselves.
- More is better, efficiency is better.
- We are lazy & scared. / In denial.
- We are greedy animals, not civilized humans.
- * The ape with a wrench.

Generational conflict. in societal development.

- We argue bcs we are different
- We do not empathise or make the effort to see
- We are scared of moving out of comfort zone.
- We are too proud to have to admit defeat

* Dilemma is the main problem
 Out of this: Social aggression.
 Manipulation.

Isolation of ourselves - Minor myth.
 Self glorification.

Shrinking of the victim.
Loss of self worth.
Domestic colonisation.

{ Are we responsible enough to
use technology? }

~ Do we have the self-respect to
use it properly? ~

➤ Do I have the self-respect to use
technology properly?

Research: Getting closer to Subject 96

* ~~Ascia~~ I'm not immune to my described
~~presented~~ evil. 152

Originality: 155

Keywords

Question own beliefs : 71

My story in relation: 75, 104

Cambridge

Balance percept & selfpercept H

* Myself / story in the world 44

* Writing about what you don't know 46, 47

What lies behind my interest in the topic.

Preparing & Incubation 125-128

My Life & Technology.

My day starts & ends in front of the pc. In fact, without it I feel bored, yet in front of it I feel trapped, lazy, fat & useless. It is both a tool & a curse.

My phone wakes me up & keeps me occupied when I'm not in front of my pc. It's like a quick fix ^{split} to ~~the~~ ^a bang. It becomes a way of measuring my relationship with others. These others who become mere profile pics on a screen. They always smile even when pissed.

My radio keeps the voices in my head at bay. The voices which judge me in the awkward silence.

All three are a means of escape when I'm alone.

I don't want to be in exile but I keep myself there by dragging myself back to the screen & profile pics instead of ~~can~~ physically connecting with others.

TECHNOLOGY is both a personal BUBBLE and a window.

We are BUBBLE BOYS, shielding ourselves from nature, discomfort, reality, physical perception & judgment.

I use it to express myself because I am too scared to do it openly to someone's face!!

We are bubble babies of the corporation but the corporation is a bubble baby itself. We just don't realise it and those that do don't want to. That is why we admire action heroes so much & people / series which shove hands in dirt - bcs we desire that but can't!!

1. My story within the story.
2. I cannot exclude myself.
3. Write about what I don't know.
4. How does it question my own beliefs.

Mute - Funny mute worker who starts using technology (lights, sounds etc.) to ~~use~~ communicate better. Loses his

leg.

Humans & Computers are constantly exchanging parts/hardware & software.

Things move on its own at times.
Rookie injures leg and gets a mechanized prosthetic. Hardware.
Brains is exchanging experience with the system = Software.

The system doesn't want to risk work so slowly it is turning us into machines - components of it.

Productivity is measured and employees are rewarded for their effectiveness - Contrast "You are valued"

Show human warmth being snuffed. Intimate moment ruled

by alarm.

No-one listens to their complaints.
The rewards are just a temporary formality.

The computer possesses authority

Anytime-anyplace workplace becomes everytime-everyplace working individual.
Rest becomes shorter as we are being conditioned to be more productive.

Our bodies & minds will wear out.

We work with technology, we break rest with technology.

The play must act as a mirror.

Living without Technology :

Wake up with sunlight - more time. Meditation, work.

Breakfast : less processed goods - healthier.

Getting ready : Leave hair natural ~ Healthier.

Driving to shop : Walk, cycle ~ Healthier.

Work : - 2w.

Work outside, pen & paper - less distractions, sun,
less cabin fever.

Relaxation :

Reading : More knowledge, healthy habit.

Practice music - learn new skill.

Sketch : New skill

Write : Therapeutic, skill valuable.

Walk, Exercise : Healthy, therapeutic.

Play with Cat : Bonding, therapeutic

Boredom : All the above.

- People want to suffer. We invent so as to want, and to want is to suffer. We crave the cyberpunk, the post-apocalyptic.
- Cameras viewing the audience and footage of them played back at themselves.
- Audience watches live footage of actors busy building.

Offices & daily life is nothing but an assembly line. Technology is forced on the individual.

"You must have it, you will have it, You need it, you have no choice."

Rows in offices, factories, homes, even on the street. "Shut it, look down, eat, we know best."

We Are Free Range Chickens

- Move room to room but still caged and fattened up.

{ We resist at first, then become complacent, then accustomed, then dependent until we forget ~~what~~ how things were before. How do I think again? }

Some who don't use it, who resist are rejected or develop Techno anxiety & Techno self consciousness

{ You are as unreliable as you are pretty }
{ and trust me you are pretty }
unreliable

WHAT IF?

What If

What if technology ceased today?

* What if we became autonomous computers? Programmed to respond in certain ways?

What if we weren't in control?

- What if we stopped thinking? * Remote control.

What if we were mere free-range animals?
+ bonobos.

* What if we were slowly turning into our own
geminoids? Mere shadows of our former selves.

What if I were the only unaffected individual
within a world of geminoids/cyborgs?

* Clocks, mobile phones, computers, televisions,
radio, smart watches. All dictate and we follow.

We are assigned positions, roles, names, identities,
numbers and we accept it.

→ Man is becoming mass produced as an
android to be exploited.

In Paradise the ideal was to be real. It was to be
the ideal to be a cyborg.

CHARACTER SHEETS AND IDEAS

General:

- 25 years old.
- 5'4" 7
- Jobless

Short Term:

Wants: ▶ A drink

- To take a walk on the street.
- Decent friends
- Carrie.

Needs:

- Income
- A point of focus
- Carrie.
- Security
- Stability
- Peace of mind.

Long Term:

Wants:

- To travel
- Family
- His own company.

Have one's:

- Carrie - wife, 26
- Mildred - Mother
- Conor - father



History:

- Grew up with father (steelworker) & mother (nurse)
- Left home at 17.
- Odd jobs, but roamed mostly.
- Met Carrie at biker bar one night who was working.
- One night stand led to pregnancy. Fell in love with her in the process.
- Tried finding a job but couldn't. Saw online ad for Genesis program
- Joined

Characteristics:

- Hates confinement
- Free spirit.
- Arrogant, short tempered, witty.
- Growing up, losing focus and more compassionate.
- Determined, motivated individual when he needs to be.

Needs:
Patience.
Stability.

Derek is a 25 year old jobless individual. With a baby on the way. In order to provide for his family he joins the Genesis program so as to earn enough money to afford them a decent living. - Crisis moment. He is a free spirited individual and never really intended to have children or a fixed relationship. But he met Carrie at a bar one night, had a one-night stand, she fell pregnant and he fell in love with her through the whole ordeal.

Dave's father worked the steel mill and his mother nursed. Carrie is a bar-lady at a biker bar. He is determined to provide a better life for them. He can be quite stubborn at times. He left home at 17 which shows that, is known to get into tangles and likes having the last word.

22 years old
Unemployed.
Deaf

Wants:

- To be recognised
- To prove himself
- To help better his disability.

Needs

- Opportunity
- To become seen as an equal to his peers.

Tessie

History:

- Born deaf
- Grew up with good fam.
- Older sister.
- Bullied at school & college
- Struggled with employment
- Decided to take job with Genesis hoping to get a job afterwards.

Characteristics:

- Pleasant friendly individual
- Always fighting.
- Doing his own thing.
- Focused on tasks at hand.
- Doesn't like being begged

41

Jessie was born deaf. Though he is well adjusted now, Jessie received a lot of discrimination and bullying as a child. During college, this continued. Jessie studied computer programming & software development and was one of the top 5 students in his class. Even with these marks however, very few managers would hire him out of fear and when they did things would be too awkward, and in time he would move on.

Being 23, Jessie has a lot of confidence & patience. He is a pleasant individual and can be very expressive. He has made a friend in Mike, although he hates the constant hugging, but knows it's from a good place.

Jessie would like to be normal, to dance to music, to hear the hustle & bustle of the city.

Age 74
 Wealthy businessman.
 Mild temperament
 Dying of cancer

Wants:

- To see his wife again.
- To die in peace
- To give to others/share.

Needs

- Medical attention - Refuses.
- Someone to share his wisdom with. Protagonist
- To see hope for humanity.

Henry

History:

- Suffered as accounted
- Started dealing in property & investing
- Met his wife through a business arrangement
- Claudia infertile
- Dealt with pain by hosting parties and playing the faust couple.
- Claudia diagnosed and passes at 71
- Henry travels reconnects with the people he shares his wealth.
- Diagnosed with tumor.
- Takes Ceresis program and makes a deal.

Characteristics:

- Mild tempered man. Good sense of humor.
- Most often the peacemaker.
- Still has a playboy philanthropist streak in him
- Very nostalgic, but has vision & wisdom.
- Can't stand arrogance or bragging as he sees much of his young or self in that.

Henry Atkins started out as an accountant who grew tired of the profession and decided he wanted his money to work for him. It started buying property and investing in business complexes at the end of his twenties. Over the years he built a solid reputation for himself and money was never a problem. In his ~~early~~ mid thirties Henry met a woman who had started a small catering company and needed someone to invest in her venture. Henry offered his help in turn that ~~he~~ she let him take her on a date and show her the city, as she was from out of town.

Five Two years later Claudia and Henry were married and ready to start a family. However, they soon discovered that Claudia could not bear children and that they would need to adopt or appoint a surrogate if their dreams were ever to be realised. Instead they took it as a sign and decided to opt for the third option and not have children. Both their careers flourished and they were never shy of friends, probably due to the many parties they hosted. As they grew on in years they spent most of their time at their holiday homes across Europe & Asia. ~~For~~ At the age of 65 Claudia was diagnosed with ~~leukemia~~ cancer.

The next ~~th~~ of six years would be spent cycling between good and bad news, as the cancer would (be removed / treated and but keep returning. At the age of 71 Claudia finally lost her battle to cancer, leaving Henry alone. He had promised her that he would keep on living and so he started traveling, taking menial jobs to reconnect with the roots of society and share his money with those who needed it. Henry came across the Genesis program through an ad on an online newspaper decided to submit to it for fun. By that time Henry had been diagnosed with a ~~tumor~~ brain tumor and made a deal that the money be paid into a trust he set up for cancer patients. Though a bit of a playboy in his day and as well as a bit of a show off at times, (then the death of his wife and his time spent amongst the people truly humbled him.

He is a man of great wisdom and a mild but humorous temperament. His main reason for joining the Genesis program is to see what the future holds to glimpse into a world he will never be a part of.

summarized

General:

42 Age
5ft 11
Unemployed
Ex conflict
Bulky.

Wants:

- Food
- To keep busy
- Good company.
- Good friends.

Needs

- Vision, perspective.
- Lose weight.

Long Term

Doesn't think that far ahead.

To be successful at something.

Needs

- To be emotionally & mentally balanced.
- Friends to keep him on track.



Mike

History:

- Grew up with father
- Left home hungry while father drinks away in bar & hits him.
- Stole to survive
- Worked as bouncer & then muscle for mobs.
- Nearly killed a man who commented on his weight
- Served 15 years Released for good behaviour.
- New world has brought back his irritability.
- 5 months out of job.
- Ex Conflict agency organized former club owner Genesis job.

Characteristics:

- Tends to underestimate his own strength
- Ruled by emotions - extremes.
- Can be very clumsy.
- Always hungry.
- Sensitive to weight.
- Can live anywhere as long as there is food & a gym.
- Curious by nature but not too bright. Can act very random.

Mike is a 42 year old ex convict who was sentenced to prison for 15 years on charges of manslaughter. Mike got out 5 months ago and has been struggling to find work ever since. No-one will hire him.

Mike grew up with his father, a heavy drinker and violent man who used to leave Mike home hungry while he went drinking. Mike, unschooled still to survive and developed a bit of an ~~eat~~ finally found a job as a bouncer and finally hired muscle for the main mob bosses in town. Over the years he developed a bit of an eating problem, probably to to the lack of food as a child. He pumps iron as well which also has him look big - Strongman type.

Mike is still adjusting to the world after his release and is unsure of what he wants in life. Takes it day by day. Mike's personality ranges on two extremes: He can be a softy, a really nice guy who, but when ticked off Mike can turn into a force to be reckoned with. He is ruled by his emotions. He has a soft spot for Mute, as he looks up to him and sees him as an inspiration.

He will do what he must but is not determined to get anywhere fast.

Aim of workers: Build Machine.

Aim of Company: Observe, ~~Register~~ Test, Efficiency.

Characters:

* They blame & institutionalize those that go insane as if the fault lies with them.

1. 'Avoid Excitement' HOW?!
* We stuff our faces with tech while kids go hungry.

Prison becomes a haven

The prisoners & institutionalized become more sane than the people who put them there. 'Leave me! I want to stay!'

The world of industry ~~erases~~ tames the individual.

Machines employed for profit.

The body rebels against the factory.

The mind is rebelling the machine.

- Until it stops. Zombies
- Some snap, some become inactive.

~~The Ape wi~~ Peel me the wrench
An ape with a wrench.

Five men working in a hole,
a factory constructing a contraption
of some sort.

'Brains' is cryptic, concise & dense, like
the programming language - But
can he keep it up?

Sounding bell or beeps indicate a
change of task, a break, a halt.
The workers are part of a machine.
The employers created this machine,
but slowly the machine is learning for
itself.

Chief gets locked out by the system in
the end.

TECHMATA

PLANNING AND

REVISION

How do we ^{morally} govern technology?
 I am providing a solution by
 showing the start of the problem
 in the life of the individual.

Technology

Separation Childhood

C-section. Technobirth.

Computer games & television: Dad working
 during day and late nights.

Computer - childhood gift.
 Cell phone - childhood gift.
 Playstation - childhood gift.

} Late
 nights

Social media - Peer pressure. Cool kid.

Solution to coolness resulted in
 techno anxiety. Must keep up to
 date. Must check notifications.

Cool kid - Better than human. Pinochio.

CONJUNCTION

The combination of elements of separation.

✓ 1. Child from birth (Born into tech religion).
Mother & Screen baby.

2. Tech Neglect.

3. Multiple identities (social media)

4. Corporations (Employee as asset)

5. Non conformity.

6. Machine vs human rhythm

7. Corporation lab rat

8. Techno Peasant as forsworn & crazy.

Seperation

child **B**orn as cyborg - Parental expectation ✓
Tech Neglect - Parent ^{Tech as} ~~addict~~, Parent addict
Social **N**ector - Multiple identities. fear pressure.
- ~~Better~~ than human

Emb Corporation lab rat - Machine rhythm.
Employee as asset - Not **p**erson.
Always watching - 24 Hour stand-by

Communal Isolation - Earphones
Tech as religion

Synopsis

Narrative Arc : Explanation of plot/problem, characters. Summarizes what happens ~~or~~ and who changes from beginning to end.

Active Voice : Use active voice & third person.

Story Advancement : Include character feelings & emotions.

First Paragraph : Identify protagonist, problem, conflict & settings.

Second Paragraph : Major Plot turns & conflicts necessary.

Last Paragraph : How major conflicts are ~~settled~~ resolved.

What Does it?

All plot points
The theme

Who is the main character?

What the main character wants?

The name of the main character?

Name of second most important character?

What is the conflict?

What is the story?

Improvement Notes

Scene Five

Comical Twist?

Tension - Adam too scared to ask for help. Lion cub in-between pack.
Scared for getting into trouble after spill.

Coughing grunts from parents. Their movements scare him.

Presses the 'on' symbol for a reason.
Stops approaching danger perhaps?

Scene Seven

Genesis Logo - Philosopher's Stone?

While Genesis ~~seems~~ explains the history play footage of history.

While Genesis scans play with moving lights. Red is scanning process, turns back to white after completion.

Assessment: ^{objectively} Refers to Adam as 'the Individual' the subject

Play with Red sticker: Defective.

The Birth, The Angel, The lesson, The new power, The school, The Job, The line, The dream, The Madhouse, The Office, The Ritual, The End.

What is Adam's goal? Profession, interests,
What is his goal in each scene?

What does he want?

What is stopping him from getting it?

Don't pull your punches.

Adam born with defect! Mechanical Heart?

Is healing worth more than your life?

External A Internal conflict

External: The system, the people

Internal: The self. Not good enough.

Rust as personification

What is Adam's darkside. - Being human, having human emotions aren't always good. I've been too one-sided.

- Maybe he kills someone and decides to turn machine. System pressure too much.

Humans are the modern resource.
Maybe he has a wind-up heart?

What is his main goal?

Adam's main goal is to try and stay as human as possible.

Adam's main goal is to become better. To replace his heart.

How does it change?

He sees the possible dangers. Wants to stay human.

What is the central conflict? Main Antagonist?

The Technological system.

What obstacles does Adam encounter?

He is not accepted into this world. He is defective as a human.

How does Adam's strengths influence the story?

Adam is able to resist the system's desire to replace his clockwork heart. He is able to oppose them for a period of time.

How does his weakness influence the story?

Being human & having time constraints, Adam cannot keep up. He feels inferior and doubts his decision to stay human.

What does the antagonist want?

To replace Adam's clock with the most advanced heart in the world. He is a guinea pig. As he is he is imperfect and a danger to the system.

What does the system stand to lose?

Adam is a flaw. Adam sees a way to bring down the system and so he must be turned or dealt with.

What are the consequences of Adam's success?

He dies. His clock runs out. Becomes worn-out.

What are the consequences of failure?

Adam loses his humanity.

Who/What gets in the way?

The system
His heart.

Is there hope?

Adam finds a way to fix his heart.

Dimension.

Adam is the perfect defect. Physically he is ~~weaker~~ less-superior than his peers, ~~but~~ ~~emotional~~ His emotion also limits his capabilities but that is why we love him. Because he is imperfect, because he has character, because he ~~repr~~ is human and shows us how we feel amongst a world of ~~cold~~ steel cold utopia.

Unlike the test, Adam makes mistakes, gets frustrated and angry, but he also loves

laughs and cares about his fellow man.
His greatest weakness, his failing heart, is his
greatest strength and shows him to value
of life.

Inciting Incident:

Adam's birth. He is 'discovered' to be a defect.
To be different. He is given a chance. He is
studied - 'Don't we just love old things?'
Adam is wound up for the first time.

Turning point:

Adam's clock winds down for the first time.
He is saved or re-wound by the priest.
So, Defeated by his defect the Priest offers
him a 'possible solution'. Now motivated to
change, Adam takes it. Becomes Active

Crisis point:

Adam's heart becomes damaged. It cannot be
re-wound. ~~Adam~~ He must find a solution or
die.

Climax:

Put to the test, Adam must choose life or humanity.

Resolution:

Adam decides humanity and learns

The clockwork heart represents the flawed mortal individual, but also the way the normal human is viewed as old fashioned. It represents something which needs to be ~~impr~~ fixed and improved.

The ~~Futuro~~ ^{Humanity's} Fusion heart represents the Utopia ~~Human~~ triumph over death, its triumph over itself. It represents technology as the messiah. ~~as the~~

What if we could live forever?

We would lose the value for life

What if the argument wasn't eternal life. What if the representation of these humans as machines was ironic? A criticism of how we have come to view others and have come to be viewed by capitalism: As objects to be improved and fitted to the max. The priest is a symbol of how capitalism views us and wants to pull us into its fold by marketing the future and technology as perfect, as the utopia.

Premise

In a world fuelled by ~~and~~ where human augmentation ~~and~~ is worshipped and humans are born augmented, a boy is born with a clockwork heart fused to his chest. He later realizes that

FHM Research.

Virtual Reality to replace work & play environments?

Gene therapy - Eliminating the bad. Immortality?

Cybernetics

"Disability as something which someone simply is when not modified with advanced technologies?"

"born not fully able-bodied, or even technically disabled before modern technology has had

the chance to radically transform us?"

Transcranial Direct-current Stimulation.

The Tree

Before scene 1.

A mother plants a seed in the ground.

Scene 1 Adam is born.

~~Scene 2~~ The seed is watered and spreads its roots anchoring itself to a red stone and the earth.

Scene 2 Adam cries. The mother sleeping at the base of a tree wakes up and picks the child up. She plays with him in the base of a large tree. Puts him back and disappears.

Scene 3

The biological mother sits center stage typing on her computer. We hear cries come and go. Grows loud and she switches on the television (shifting focus). Digital/Cyber wakes up & plays with Adam under the tree.

Scene 3

Adam is dribbling the ball on stage. ~~and~~ Footage displays ^{cybernetic} ~~an~~ Adam tries to mimick him but fails. scorns himself and kicks the alien. Priest sees him and orders father to scorn him. Adam alone in the centre. Priest steps his father

Techmata

By Shaun Peters

Stage Description

The performance space can either be set up in a large hall or warehouse. The space should have an unpolished cold, 'metal-and-concrete' feel to it. The audience will be seated on escalating benches above the performance space. The performance space is built within a trench meaning that all the audience members will be elevated above the action. The floor of the stage is painted green like the emerald tablet with the scriptures reading down from the opposite end of the entrance.

At the left end of the space a church apse and ambulatory stands erected with a large white projector screen attached and framed within the ambulatory. A preacher podium stands in the middle of the cathedral space with two steps leading up to the platform upon which the whole structure is built. Two flatscreen televisions are mounted on the corners of the cathedral structure and are turned slightly inward. Downstairs and 2m diagonally outward from the podium stand two round and knee height sitting blocks.

Three quarters down the right end of the space stands a round sacrificial pit of 3m in diameter. A 30cm high stone wall is built around the pit protecting a rustic red and brown painted interior. There is an opening at the front of the pit big enough for a hospital bed to fit through. Within the pit in the far right section a stone altar stands erected with an 'On' symbol chiselled into the front which faces the cathedral.

Four escalating benches will make up the seating area for the audience, with two on a side and a two meter gap in-between them. Large 1.5 by 1.5m rectangular stone pillars are erected at the four outer corners of the benches as well as in the gap between the benches. They stretch above the audience and help close in the performance space. Large expressionless mechanical faces are mounted at the top which look down at the performance area. Each one of the pillars is assigned with a symbol painted on the side facing the performance space. The logos are of the following organisations: Apple, Google, Transhumanist Party, IBM, Microsoft, Darpa

Main Characters

Adam

Adam symbolises mankind in its natural / human state. As a human Adam is driven largely by his emotions, more so than the majority of the other characters in the play and the play follows him through his emotional and rational development from birth to adult. This emotional presence is characterised by a desire for interpersonal communication and recognition. However, this presence also makes Adam vulnerable target and outsider within a world driven by technology and boasts a lack of empathy and individuals without the ability to reason outside of the technological framework.

Adam's mother

Adam's mother embodies the modern generation of mothers who romanticise the idea of pregnancy, motherhood and the perfect child, only to come to the realisation of the large amount of responsibilities which can both be time wise and emotionally taxing. Unlike the ideal mother figure, Adam's mother rarely makes emotional or physical contact with her son and instead focuses her attention on work.

Adam's Father

Adam's father, like his wife, embodies the modern parental tendency to romanticise the idea of parenthood only to give in to become guilty of tech neglect. The pursuit of wealth and status makes Adam's father a financially ambitious man and he places a large amount of value on material wealth and little on family.

Priest / Doctor

As the one who delivers Adam the doctor represents nothing more than a medical expert, but as the individual who exposes Adam to technology for the first time the Doctor takes on the role of Priest. The two roles are also combined to serve performer economy. As representative and mediator between the followers of technology and science and the greater system the priest serves as a guide and supervisor over the people and bestows on him the power to save and condemn those who live within the system. Delivering Adam both at birth and following him throughout his 'spiritual' deliverance also gives the character an omnipresent and immortal trait.

Supporting Characters

Ancestors - 4 performers.

Characters representing our primal origins and the start of technological development.

Labour men and women - 20 performers.

Representing the trend of romanticising parenthood and its cultivation.

Nurse

Assistant to the Doctor / Priest.

School Children - 20 performers.

Representing the modern youth.

Factory Workers / corporate workers - 4 performers.

Representing the labour force and the reality of living corporate 'assets'.

Mental Patients - 10 performers.

Victims of Technotology who have been mentally and physically broken.

Congregation - 20 performers.

Devotees of Technotology cult.

Scene One

The audience enters the space. A soft light is lit over the sacred fire pit. After they are seated, the large spotlight brightens and one performer enters space. He is cautiously crawling on all fours. As he enters he stops and observes the space. Unaware of the audience he moves towards the ceremonial pit and discovers a metal box in the centre. He begins to examine the box without touching it. As he is about to open the lid another performer enters downstage (from where the audience entered). The two performers spot one-another and halt. They are frozen and they make direct eye contact, each waiting for the other to react. Slowly the first performer moves to the outer rim of the fire pit and starts circling around the pit. The second performer does the same and we get the idea of two animals circling one-another.

When the performers reach their third rotation they come to a halt, with their sides facing the audience. Without warning the second performer lunges for the first, blocks his grab attempt, swings around him, picks him up from behind and flings him around (The toss/ lift can be done by having the second performer fold his arm around the latter's waist, allowing the later to put his arm around his neck, and using his other hand to grip his upper leg from the bottom.) After the lift the first performer spins around and the two collide with their fingers interlinked and try and push one another out of the space. The performers move out of the pit. As they continue to compare their brute strength, a third performer enters the space, also on all fours. He spots the two clashing and sneaks towards the pit. He sees the box and circles it. He picks it up but is seen by the other two. He quickly puts down the box and jumps out of the pit.

The first two look at each-other and then back at the third. Deciding to put their differences aside they let go of one another and circle around to him (the one going around the left and the other right). As they reach the halfway mark a fourth performer enters from behind the third. The two see one-another and decide to team up against the approaching two individuals. Each picks a target and moves in to engage.

The following will be a description of each of the individual fights respectively:

The first is between performer one and three (I will refer to them as 1 and 3). When they collide they interlock their fingers a pushing match, just as the one done before. 1 relaxes his left arm. Using his opponent's momentum against him, he swings 3 around, trapping him with his own arm, much like the formal dance move. 1 reaches around the left side of 3 with his right hand and while bending over, pulls the 3 onto his back. 3 is now balancing himself

on 1, while 1 slowly 'sumo walks' forward. 3 flips himself backwards over 1 and they stand up to face each other. As they do 3 pushes 1 who falls into back roll and remains motionless on his stomach. 3 rushes over to 1, dives into a forward roll. While 3 is in the roll, 1 flips himself over. Coming out of the roll, 3 dives on top of 1. As he lands, the two grab hands and 1 catches 3 with his feet resting under 3's stomach. 3 is balancing in a 'flying man' position. 1 kicks 3 off. 1 roles back into a sprinter's starting position and dashes towards 3. Grabbing him by the waist, like a rugby tackle, 1 attempts to pick 3 up. 3 however stands strong and reverses the move by reaching over and grabbing hold of 1 just under his stomach. 3 steps back into a lunge. 1 places both his hands on the knee of 3 and kicks off into a handstand position which is balanced by 3. Three bends forward, places his palms on the upper back of 1 and helps 1 to roll over onto his back. 1 lies on 3's back, both are exhausted. 3 pushes out from his lunge, forcing 1 off. Again they collide into a push stance, but both are too exhausted to carry on. They fall to their knees, still having fingers interlaced and rest their heads on each-other's shoulders.

The following is a description of 2 and 4's movement sequence:

2 dashes towards 4 and pushes him down by the shoulders into a kneeling position. He steps onto 4's knee and swings himself onto 4's back (note, this is not a piggyback position) and 2 places his lower right or left leg in the middle of 4's back and holds onto his shoulders with the other leg straightened out behind him. 4 gets up, still hunched over, and spirals around a few times, trying to grab hold of 2 on his back. Eventually 2 jumps off and taunts 4 to make his move. 4 lunges for 2 but stops just as he sees 2 about to throw a punch, which he dodges. 2's momentum counts against him and he punches past 4. 4, guiding 2's fist away, grabs hold of 2 in the pit of his right arm and under his right leg and lifts him up. 4 swings 2 around once, sets him down, and falls into a lunging position in front of 2 while simultaneously pushing 2 away on the chest. 2 staggers back into a kneeling position, holding his chest. Faking injury, 2 suddenly goes onto all fours and runs towards 4. Just in front of four 2 presses down on his hands, presses off on his feet and pushes himself through in-between 4's legs feet first and front facing down. As he makes it through he gets ready to jump onto 4's back, but 4 turns around and catches 2 mid-air. Both use one hand to grip the other's throat and the other hand to keep the position stable. 4 spirals twice keeping 2 held in this position, both pretending to throttle the other. 4 comes to a standstill, and keeping their hands on their opponent's throat, they slowly drop onto their knees while maintaining fierce contact. The two are exhausted and come to rest in the same end position as 1 and 3.

The lights on stage dim and an ominous red light shines down on the ceremonial pit. The four performers stare cautiously at the pit and the box it houses. 2 and 3 jump on their partners backs who then slowly walk over to the pit. The performers form a circle around the outer edge of the pit and circle it in a squatted crab walk. The red light begins to sporadically brighten and dim, mimicking fire. The performers move into the circle. Two of them pick up the box and hold it into the air. The third climbs onto them forming a pyramid. He opens the latch of the metal box and in it we see a large red button. The fourth performer grabs the box and jumps onto the altar and faces them. The three retreat slowly as the fourth individual stands holding the box proudly. As he presses down on the performer button and the lights go out.

Scene TWO

The stage is dark. The main projector screen starts flashing images of humanity's evolution in quick succession: The evolution of the physical body, religions, architecture, weapons, transport, leaders, wars, global warming, pollution, over-the-top advertisements of appliances (like GLOMAIL), cars, fast food, cereals, perfumes, pc and console games, cellphones. The footage takes another serious turn. Images of human enhancement follow from here which include prosthetic limbs, pace makers, synthetic heart transplants, neural and cochlear implants, cryogenic experiments, virtual reality experiments, gene therapy experiments (designer babies), artificial intelligence, mind upload, synthetic brain experiments and neural computer interface for paraplegics.

Statements from experts and inventors can also be played while some of the images are shown; such as a comment by Einstein over the atom bomb, speeches by Hittler and Charlie Chaplin, statements by the Transhumanist Party leader (Zoltan Istvan), etc.

The screen goes white and we see an animation of seven streams of blood red water coming together and forming a ruby like stone, all in front of a silvery white background. The stone morphs into an 'ON' symbol the vertical line growing into a red tree bearing golden fruits. This image becomes the logo behind the Genesis brand name, which fades into the forefront of the logo. A woman does the voice-over for the advertisement (Note that this is played whilst we view the following footage and diagrams)

EVE: Genesis. Be more.

Footage is shown of children playing a football match followed by a construction worker lifting heavy building materials (a heavy steel

bar). The footage cuts to a series of animated blueprints of leg, arm and heart augmentations.

EVE: Whether on the field or at work, human limitations are finally a thing of the past. Break strength and stamina barriers and set new goals with ULTIMA Limb and Cardiovascular Augmentation Range.

The advertisement cuts again to filmed footage, this time of a professional office worker efficiently at work and a university lecturer conducting a class with great enthusiasm.

EVE: Hours of cognitive slaving, stunted memory and depressive disorders now fade into yesteryear.

It cuts to animated diagrams of an artificial hippocampus implanted in an individual's head and another diagram displaying an implanted transcranial direct-current stimulation device (tDCS) with electrode pads under the skin on the sides of the head with wires leading to a battery installed between the shoulder blades (the device speeds up the performance and learning rate of the brain).

EVE: With increased mental health and performance just an implant away, the ULTIMA Cognition Range will open you to a new world ripe with knowledge.

Footage is shown of a group of teens walking in the mall browsing on their phones whilst engaging in spirited conversation. We see them using a Genesis mobile application.

EVE: With fast and reliable connectivity, browsing and checking up on your implant data has never been easier with the Genesis wireless network and mobile software.

It cuts to a display of the Genesis mobile application and diagrams displaying the connection between the phone and an individual's implanted augmentations.

And with the ULTIMA Cognition Range sensory information is automatically recorded and saved to your implant, mobile device and cloud account for safe storage, with instant playback available at your fingertips.

The final footage displays an old couple outperforming their peers at the gym and cuts to them playing Frisbee in the park with their children and grandchildren.

EVE: The future is now. Be extraordinary. Be Free. Genesis, be more.

The Genesis logo and brand name fade into the foreground. Note: Each individual in the ad and the cast (except for Adam) has a red 'ON' symbol tattooed on their forehead just under the hairline to show

that they have been augmented. The add ends like an old television being switched off (the picture is horizontally compressed to a thin white line before the screen goes dark)

In the background we hear a faint heartbeat, which grows louder as the scene progresses. A spotlight fades in on a pregnant woman in robes lying on a hospital bed in the middle of the pit. She is facing the projector screen and in pain.

Her husband enters and takes his place next to her bed. He merely stands looking down at her, expressionless. He turns to face the projector screen and they both wait in anticipation. The woman suddenly lets out a shout in pain and the two side screens display the 'ON' symbol. The projector screen starts flashing and finally displays an ultrasound image. The woman desperately reaches out towards the screen. She does not speak but merely voices her impatience through short laughs and groans in-between the pain.

We see the projected baby move suddenly which excites her more. The happiness is short-lived and she suddenly gives another shout in pain, louder than the one before. The heartbeat stops in the background. A doctor and nurse enter the space, each with the 'ON' symbols stamped on their uniforms. The doctor comes to a standstill behind the mother while the nurse turns the bed a 180 degrees. The spotlight on the pit is cut in half so that we only see the lower half of the mother's body and the Doctor and Nurse at the foot of the bed. The Nurse throws an operating cloth over the mother's stomach. The mother and father are still only fixated on the screen.

The doctor proceeds to perform a c-section and we see the blood dripping into the ceremonial pit. Just before the child is pulled from the womb the heartbeat is heard again, but suddenly changes into a ticking clock as the child is removed. The ultrasound image still shows the baby but it starts to distort, upsetting the mother. The doctor and nurse are confused as they see the clockwork heart fused to the child's chest.

The doctor cuts the umbilical cord and the nurse wraps the child in a blanket as he stitches up the mother. The bed is turned once more and the ultrasound image returns to normal. The nurse pushes the mother off of the stage as the doctor turns and places the child in the incubator which is placed on the altar. He moves around behind the altar and proceeds to put ceremonial drapes over his shoulders which also have the 'ON' symbol printed on them.

As he finishes dressing himself he draws the 'ON' symbol in the air with two fingers, kisses them and places them on the child's forehead. On the side screens the circle of the 'ON' symbol disappears and only the line is shown (representing both the 'on' state but also the number 'one' as another digit being added to the

system). The ticking clock slows down suddenly and comes to a dead stop. The doctor quickly inspects the heart and then goes about turning a dial on it, winding it up. The wind-up is emphasised by a soundtrack of a alarm clock mechanism being turned. The ticking returns to normal and the doctor steps back in relief.

He stares at the child in a mixture of disgust and fascination. He proceeds to leave the stage, stops midway to look at the child once more and finally disappears off stage. A robotic face appears on screen and looks down at the child.

Lights and screen fade out.

Scene THREE

On the projector screen we see animated footage of a woman planting a seed in the ground. We only see her hands. She waters it and gets up to leave. As she stands up the camera zooms out showing her within a clearing in the woods. We see her walking away with her back turned towards us. The screen fades to black.

A spotlight lights up on Adam's mother sitting centre stage and typing at her desk. Her handbag is hung over her chair and she has a few papers with her on the desk. She is completely immersed in what she is doing.

We hear a baby's cries fade in softly from the distance only to fade out again. The mother does not react to it and merely touches the side of her head as if pushing a button. The cries fade in louder and then out again. Still she does not react and merely keeps typing on her laptop.

The cries fade in for a third time. It is at its loudest and does not fade out again. The mother suddenly grabs a remote off of the table turns and aims it towards the projector. The light on her goes out and a spotlight lights up on a bassinet further downstage near the projector screen. On the screen we see an animation of the woman who planted the seed. She is sleeping in the hollow base of a large tree. Adam's cries wake her. As she steps out of the hollow base the animation changes to real footage of her walking closer towards the camera and looking down at Adam.

She kneels down and starts speaking to him in a soothing, loving voice; it calms him down. She reaches down past the shot and picks him up (note, we never see Adam in the bassinet, but merely hear him. The aim is to create the impression that Adam is actually not in the bassinet anymore). She stands cradling him in her arms and carries him into the hollow trunk. She starts to play with him

(Touching his nose, tickling him and making funny faces at him). Adam starts laughing and she kisses him on the forehead.

A spotlight lights up on the mother. She is still at her desk. We hear a cell phone ringing and she immediately gets up to answer it. She cannot find it and proceeds to search her pockets, the desk, under it, and finally her handbag. Although she is mostly expressionless we sense a slight tenseness to her, like a thread being pulled to tightly and on the verge of snapping.

The woman under the tree continues playing with Adam and occasionally looks over at the mother continuing her frantic search. She finds it in a small pocket in her handbag but it stops ringing just before she can answer. She stands staring at her screen for a second, then sits down and continues her typing.

The woman under the tree places Adam back in his bassinet and waves him goodbye as the screen fades to white. Adam starts to cry fiercely, but goes unnoticed by the mother whose focus remains on the laptop screen.

Lights and cries fade.

Scene FOUR

We hear the dribbling of a ball on stage. Floor lights upstage fade in and we only see the faint silhouette of a performer's legs. The performer tries to perform tricks with the ball as if trying to keep it away from a rival player. The playing is accompanied by a playful tribal drum beat. His playing becomes more intense as he expands his playing field. He fiercely guides the ball from side to side as he makes his way from one end to the other.

The drums stop. The projector displays footage of a pro augmented football player practicing on the field at night time. He effortlessly guides the ball over the field, does tricks and makes incredible shots at the net. Adam stares in awe. The drums start up again and Adam tries to push himself to be as good as the pro. Several drums join in and the rhythm and volume increases (war drum beat) as Adam keeps pushing himself.

He is running out of breath and starts to stumble, but carries on. As the drum beat reaches a climax Adam takes a shot at the altar, he misses. The drums have stopped and Adam has fallen to his knees looking at the pro standing centre field. The camera films him from a low angle as he looks to the stands.

We hear the ticking of Adam's heart and he breathes heavily. Adam starts tearing at the fused device at his chest in frustration and strikes it. He gets up walks to the altar, kicks it in frustration and sits down with his back against the altar and his face buried between his knees.

We hear the strike of a gavel. Adam looks up and sees the priest behind his podium. Once again we hear the gavel striking down at which Adam gets up and tries to show his apologies for striking the altar. Adam's father enters the space and stands behind the altar. His father grabs hold of him and drags him to the pit, expressionless. The priest nods at him giving his approval and urging him to carry on. The lights go off as the father bends Adam over one of the pit's walls and begins to give him a hiding.

Adam is facing the screen. As his father pulls back after each strike, the red light flashes down on the pit. The father gives his last strike and the lights stay off. A spotlight lights up Adam in the centre of the pit; he is on his knees. An icy blue light reveals his father behind the altar. The priest calls Adam closer. Hesitantly Adam makes his way. As he reaches the midpoint the gavel strikes down once more and Adam's father marches up to him. Adam stumbles back and falls to the ground. Just before his father reaches him the Priest points a mobile device at him, pushes a button freezing the father in his shoes. Adam is frozen with fear.

The priest makes his way towards Adam and urges him to inspect his father. Adam circles around him, poking him but the father remains frozen. The priest hands Adam another mobile device and urges him to use it. The Sistine Chapel painting is shown on the two side screens, but with God a robot reaching out to Adam. Adam hesitantly takes a picture. As he takes it a 'like' a notification sound is heard and a symbol appears on the projector screen. Adam takes one again and again the tone is heard and the symbol appears. Adam laughs in his amazement.

The priest places his hand on Adam's shoulder and encourages him to take a walk with him. They exit the performance space with the father still frozen.

Lights out.

Scene SIX

Marilyn Manson's *Disposable Teens* starts to play, along with a track of laughing, playful children. Groups of performers are gathered at the four corners of the space. The scenery is dark and we do not see them at first. White strobe lights flash in the background revealing their silhouette figures (the feeling which needs to be created is

that of the audience being surrounded by this possibly hostile, but emotionless crowd of people).

The performers enter space in a straight line 16 seconds into the song. They are dressed in school uniforms and do a slow march to the beat of the track. Some are typing on their phones, others are playing on their PSP and Nintendo consoles, and some are walking with their heads down whilst listening to music on their iPods. They lack any form of facial expression.

The four groups cross each other in the middle and pass by one-another without making eye-contact. When each individual reaches the opposite corner, they turn around and make their way back to their starting corner. The lines must be continuous without any breaks or large gaps in-between the individuals. The scenery is dark with the constant flashing of white light to the beat of the song.

When the performers enter the stage at the beginning the projector screen starts to play animation footage of the following:

The first shot shows a playground in a schoolyard, with the school and its entrance in the background. The shot moves in and we see the Children playing on swings, climbing frames, sandpits etc. As the camera moves, in the children stop their playing, pull their mobile phones out of their pockets and start walking towards the entrance, glued to the screens. The camera follows them from behind. The entrance swings open and they enter into a long hall, filled with lockers and posters. The posters display Apple, Android, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube logos which cover the abnormally high walls. At the other end of the hall the doors fly open again revealing the priest standing at the entrance of a dark room with his hands outstretched towards them. The children enter past him and disappear into the darkness. As the camera enters the room, darkness covers the screen. The camera zooms out of the pitch black hollow eye-socket of a child. The child is shockingly thin with dead grey and blue skin and the augmentation tattoo on his forehead. As the camera continues to zoom out it reveals six more starving 'dead' children. They climb out of a river of ones and zeros (data). The camera zooms out more and reveals metal cyborg children standing proud and healthy next to the banks of the river; they are facing away from it. The seven 'dead' children walk up to the metal children, stretch their mouths to an abnormal size and devour the metal children.

At this point Adam enters the space with the priest. Adam stars at his peers, not knowing what to think. The priest urges him to join them and make friends. He tries to enter into the middle of the stage but struggles to breach the lines which keep cutting him off. Finally he breaks through but lands face down on the floor. In the middle of the stage the groups enlarge the crossing point and pass

around Adam at a considerable distance. The image is of an invisible bubble surrounding Adam which the groups are trying to avoid. Adam gets up and again looks at the people. He turns his gaze towards the screen.

On the screen the animation continues. After the devouring of the children, the camera keeps zooming out. It zooms out past the Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube profiles of several teenagers, one by one. We see pictures and videos of them with their friends, food, daily activities, as well as their twitter comments. Adam stares at these 'real people' on screen. He turns away and tries to greet individuals moving past him, but they ignore him. He tries to stop them by intruding on their personal space to draw their attention, but fails.

Again he stares at the screen. The animation moves through Facebook pictures and life events of a young girl. Adam looks to the row of people and spots the girl amongst them and impatiently decides to pull her out of the line. He puts his hands on her upper arms to reassure her and tries to gain her attention by smiling and nodding, but she merely stares right through him. He starts shaking her lightly but she does not react. Adam sees a selfie picture of her and a friend being displayed on the screen. He takes out his phone and takes a selfie of them together. As the camera flashes she pushes Adam to the ground and stares at him as he lies on the floor. The rows of people come to a stop with their backs turned towards the two individuals.

The girl starts to force a laugh and take pictures of Adam who is face down on the floor. In an instant all the performers turn around and start taking pictures of Adam and join in the girl's mechanical laughter. The screen flashes through pictures of Adam on the floor and next we see a YouTube video of the incident under the title "Techno Peasant Epic Fail". In video scrolls down the comments section, displaying the insensitive and crude comments from trolls, such as "Rejected!", "Reject!", "What the hell is that!?", "Poor little reject :D", "Tick tock home Clockboy" etc. The group, as well as the girl, turn their backs on him. The girl rejoins them and they exit the stage in a synchronised march.

Adam still remains on the floor. Again he pries at the clockwork heart in his chest. He rages on until we suddenly start hearing his ticking clock slowing down. All the lights fade out except for a spotlight on Adam. Adam tries to get up but passes out on the floor and the spotlight goes out.

We hear the ticking clock give its last strokes until it goes silent. Suddenly we hear his heart being wound up three times and the ticking recommence until Adam gives a long desperate breath. The lights go up on the space. Everyone is gone except for the priest

standing next to Adam. He helps him to his feet smiling at a confused Adam.

Adam grasps his heart in shock but the priest takes him by the shoulder and points to the projector screen which displays the 'ON' symbol. He gives Adam a white card with the Genesis logo printed on. He blesses Adam with by drawing the 'ON' symbol in the air, kissing his fingers and placing it on the child's forehead and exits the stage leaving Adam fixated on the screen. Adam realises he is completely alone. He looks at the card in his hands then places his hand over his clockwork heart.

Lights fade out.

Scene SEVEN Part A

White lights light up the clinical performance area. On projector screen we see a looping advertisement slideshow of a company called Genesis. It displays 'perfect' individuals in their ideal work space and at home with their model families. Bright smiles and the latest technology are emphasised in the footage material and each new picture is captioned by the words *BE MORE*. The television screens on the sides of Adam display a moving Genesis logo on a silver background.

Adam enters the space from the opposite end and slowly walks down the length of the room, studying it closely. He is a full grown man by now. In his hand he holds the Genesis card given to him and looks at it occasionally to make sure he is in the right place. There is a new found confidence in his stride. He sees the chair in the middle of the room and goes to sit down, waiting to be assisted. Without warning a professional and attractive female voice is heard playing through the surrounding speakers. All the lights in the space except those surrounding Adam fade out, singling him out in the space.

EVE: Welcome to Genesis. For more information about our mission and vision, press one on the key pad to your left. To inquire about available job opportunities, press two. To speak to a consultant, press three.

Adam presses 'one' on the keypad.

EVE: Be more.[pause] In the beginning man wielded the fire of change. With it he sought to create a world of infinite possibilities by shaping nature to his needs.

Adam presses the 'skip' button. Nothing happens.

Raising empires from beneath his feet man looked out at his cities and saw it had become small and limited.

Adam presses 'skip' again. He is getting frustrated. Nothing happens.

With vessels he set out to explore new worlds and finally, inspired by all his knowledge, built his own virtual realm, surpassing the limitations of his physical world.

Adam presses the 'skip' button continuously.

EVE: At Genesis we work to surpass these very limitations drafted by nature and the human body. Using Nano-, Bio-, Information and Cognitive technology (NBIC) we are helping individuals expand their physical and mental capabilities and allowing mankind to set goals once deemed impossible. Be connected. Be extraordinary. Be Free. Genesis, BE MORE.

Growing very impatient, Adam presses 'three' on the console.

EVE: Please be aware that our consultants are currently busy.
Please wait for the next available consultant.

A futuristic and peaceful tune plays softly in the background while Adam waits. Again he grows impatient.

EVE: Our consultants are currently unavailable. Please wait for the next...

Adam presses 'two' on the keypad.

EVE: Welcome to our careers and job application tutorial. To find out more about available opportunities, press 'one'. To start the application process, press 'two'.

Adam presses 'two'.

EVE: Welcome. To start the application process, please enter your name and surname into keypad.

Adam enters his details.

EVE: Please remain still while the tricorder scans for the necessary vitals. (The screen displays the software scanning Adam's animated body).

EVE: Movement detected. Please remain still while the system rescans your vitals.

Adam holds his breath and remains comically still.

EVE: Scan complete (A red area is highlighted on the animated chest and the image slides out of view). Please press down on the thumb scanner located on your right.

Adam sees the scanner on the left arm of the chair and presses his thumb down on it.

EVE: Scanning complete. Please blow into the breathalyzer on your left.

An arm swings around and moves the breathalyzer to Adam's mouth as he looks left.

EVE: Scan complete. Please look into the retinal scanner located to your right.

A similar arm brings around the retinal scanner and Adam proceeds to look into it.

EVE: Scan complete. Please remain still while the system acquires a necessary blood sample.

Adam looks worried. He feels a prick under his right thumb which is resting on the arm of the chair and pulls away. He tries to suck the remainder of the blood from his thumb.

EVE: Scan complete. Please wait while Genesis analyses your profile...ANALYSIS COMPLETE.

EVE: Application review. Welcome Adam Renny.

Adam Renny.

Age, 24.

Date of Birth: 7 July 1991.

Height, 1.78m.

Weight, 72kg.

Body fat percentage, 15%.

BMI, 22.663, normal.

Parents: Maggie and Terence Renny.

Grade Point Average: 2.8 (or 70%)

Augmentations: 0

ONLINE ACTIVITY REVIEW

The average daily browsing time: 2.3 hours.

Sites include: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. 2.3 Hours characterised by short browsing sessions throughout the day via mobile, and two lengthier pc browsing sessions in the morning and evening of plus minus 45 min each.

User activities: Sharing of comic and motivational pictures posted by Adam Renny and fellow users; browsing through the home page and following life events and posts by social media friends and subscribers, including a potential love interest; browsing, liking and sharing media of 'friends' and subscribers; playing quiz games centred around fictional characters and personality assessments.

Subscribed groups: OGR (Online Gaming Realm), Spirit Science, I Fucking Love Science, Formula One News, Animation Nation, EcoLeaf, Greater Minds, Kickass Comics, PewDiePie, World of Warcraft, Blizzard, Internations Chat

Community, Lore and Mythology, Event Finder, IGN, Epic Fails, Epic Music, Smosh, and College Humor.

Addition online activity: Adam Renny is subscribed to the *World of Warcraft* and *Age of Conan* online gaming community. Average login time on MMORPGS per week is 8 hours. Playing time has been recorded largely between the hours of 9PM and 11PM after which Adam proceeds to browse...

Adam frantically presses the skip button.

Psychological Profile:

Hours spent online indicate a strong, irrational desire for peer acknowledgement and human interaction. Majority of communication is done via content sharing and 'liking' as opposed to personal status updates or comments. We draw the conclusion that the subject lacks confidence in language capabilities as well as any form of discourse (online or face-to-face). Subscribed groups and topics indicate a healthy balance of rationality and emotionality, but the possibility of a divided mindset between scientific and spiritual ideologies. The frequent following of recognised online personalities reveals the tendency for over-idolising of successful individuals. We conclude that the subject possibly projects their success onto himself.

MMORPG data reveals that arcane characters make up 80% of the subject's character database. This includes Druids, Warlocks, Mages and Priests. The subject's focus on arcane identities betrays the desire to stand out from his peers, to control his environment and exceed natural laws on both a physical and social scale. Subject's power exertion displays signs of disregard for authority and rebellious tendencies.

Fetlife profile data shows the subject describing himself as a mature sexual catch who is open to all games and experiences. Webcam footage shows Adam browsing pornographic sites at an average of four times a week, during hours when family are within the immediate vicinity. We conclude that data shows the subject to be sexually uninformed and unfulfilled. The subject exerts risk taking tendencies, even at the possible cost of his personal reputation. (At this time, footage has been shown of Adam browsing pornographic sites. On one such occasion his

bedroom door opens and he quickly jumps to shut off his computer screen)

Final conclusion: Though the subject's communication skills leave much to be desired, the accumulated data shows him to be an adaptive individual, capable of acquiring and mastering new skills and knowledge in very little time. We regard subject's economical but thorough use of time as a valuable skill within an industrial work environment. However, the lack augmentations could prove problematic considering the subject's impulsive behaviour and physical disability. Though the subject could be of use to the Genesis program the said individual would need to be monitored closely as a potential risk to the system. Genesis regards the subject to a potential future asset and hereby deems the candidate fit for trials.

Adam smiles brightly, eager to start his trial run. Two performers enter. The one places a hardhat on Adam's head and slaps a sticker on it with the number C.4905. The second performer pulls Adam up and slaps an identical sticker on Adam's chest (Note. Their treatment of him should be rough and unforgiving). They take the chair off-stage and the screens go black.

Scene SEVEN Part B

An alarm goes off and red lights flash on the performance area. Adam looks around in panic. Hurried, he starts exiting the space. He is cut off by three men entering in single file. The front individual grabs hold of Adam and passes him on to the second who places Adam between himself and the third individual. The alarm stops. The three stand still, staring dead-ahead (The idea is that of men so emotionally cut off and so use to the work routine that they have become mechanical). A large circular structure is pushed wheeled into the space with four sections attached:

The first is a conveyor belt with bolts and blocks attached to it. On the side hangs a hammer and wrench. Secondly is a screen which is a computer screen which is connected and mounted over a keyboard. Thirdly is a work bench containing a crate of microchips and a testing pen. Lastly is a work bench with hanging mechanical limbs attached to an overhead frame and limb parts on the table waiting to be assembled.

A tone sounds and the performers march towards the workstations, all in sync except for Adam. They come to a standstill, each behind their section. Adam is out of sync with all the movements and his face is riddled with confusion. Another tone is heard and the belt

starts to move with blocks and bolts fitted to it and the screen is switches on.

A tone sounds again and the crew step forward, each picking up their necessary equipment (again all this is done simultaneously). The men start to work at their stations. Their movements are mechanically precise. Adam quickly falls in. He is stationed behind the turning conveyor belt holding the wrench and trying to tighten the bolts as they move past him. The belt is moving too fast for him, but every time he starts to adapt to the pace a tone is heard once again and the speed increases at all the work stations.

Adam tries to signal to the others that he cannot keep up and that they should stop the belt, all whilst still hitting each block. There is no reaction from them and they carry on without being aware of his existence.

A different tone sounds and each of the men quickly moves to a new station in a clockwise direction. A tone sounds and the men engage in their new tasks. Adam sums up what needs to be programmed and gets to work. Again the speed increases with the signals and Adam starts to burn up. The switching tone is heard and Adam runs to the chips and starts to test each one at a ridiculous pace. He has barely started when the tone to switch is heard again.

Adam is out of breath, and struggles to focus on the parts at the third station which need to be assembled. Before he can attach the second finger of the mechanical hand the men switch and Adam picks up the hammer to start reinforcing the blocks. He strikes once, twice, and collapses on the third.

There is no reaction from the two remaining co-workers. A warning alarm starts to ring with red flashing lights lighting up the room. The lights go out and the alarm comes to an abrupt stop. The ticking heart takes over from the alarm and we hear it slow down almost coming to a standstill.

A faint red light lights up the conveyor belt. The four men pick him up, place him on the belt and try to wind up his heart. We hear two turns to the heart and then a gnashing of gears and a snap of metal.

Lights out.

Scene EIGHT

The projector screen lights up. On the screen we see a person running down a dark and empty hallway. They sound out of breath and frightened. He reaches the door and flings it open. As the white

light pours through Adam jolts awake in a hospital bed with the spotlight on him.

He is in the middle of the room and facing the altar. Adam looks around but sees no-one. He inspects his chest and notices that the mechanism is covered with a bandage. Adam slowly pulls at the bandage, peering behind it. He pauses in shock, and then rips it off exposing the broken turning mechanism hanging from his chest. Adam jumps out of bed unable to fathom what happened to his heart. He tries push the mechanism back into place but it keeps fails to stay in place. In his frustration Adam rips the sheets off of the bed and hurls the pillow down the room. He is weak and out of breath and leans against the bed to keep himself from collapsing.

The Priest enters from the altar's entrance. Adam notices him, pauses, and then lunges himself at the holy man grabbing him by the front of his robes and pinning him against the altar. The priest remains calm with his hands in the air trying to still the anger in Adam. Adam exertion again proves too much and he drops to his knees leaning against the altar. He is breathing heavily and shoots the priest a threatening glare.

Two nurses enter bringing the bed closer. They help the young man to his feet and onto the bed. The Priest places his hand on Adam's chest then gives him a reassuring nod. Adam passes out from exhaustion and the Priest nods at the nurses who proceed to push him to the middle of the room. They prep for an operation as a doctor enters joining the party. The Priest, standing at the foot of the bed, takes a step back to view the operation.

The lights fade out.

The projector screen lights up. On the screen we see Adam running down a dark and empty hallway as we view everything in first person. The he sounds out of breath and frightened. He reaches a door at the end of the hallway, flings it open and is overwhelmed by a blinding white light. When his eyes adapt Adam finds himself in a dense green forest. He proceeds onward trying to make his way through the unfamiliar environment and brushes away all the branches in his path. Looking up, Adam sees the sun peering at him through the leaves and hears the birds singing in the trees.

The atmosphere is peaceful as he moves through the dense forest. Throwing his hands up he stares at the sky and laughs out loud. He closes his eyes (in the footage this is shown with the screen going dark).

Adam takes a few deep breathes. At this moment a faint red light displays the operating table where the team is still at work. Adam

opens his eyes in the footage. In front of him is a big apple tree in a large clearing. He walks towards the tree, reaches out and picks the reddest apple he can find. As he inspects the apple he notices that something is wrong. He squeezes the apple in his hand and it breaks beneath his grip exposing a plastic exterior and a hollow interior.

The operating team are having a difficult time as the operation is starting to fail. As Adam looks back up in the footage he sees Mother Nature standing in front of him. She is saddened and reaches out towards him. The sky starts to grow dark and the wind begins to pick up speed. Adam takes a step back, away from her, turns and runs towards to forest. Loud hurricane sirens start sounding and we begin to hear machine gun fire growing louder. Adam keeps running, glancing back occasionally.

On the table Adam is shaking and moaning with the team trying to hold him down and continue the operation. Explosions are heard along with the screams of men and the continuous gunfire. Adam gets himself caught in a thorn bush and is stuck. The explosions grow louder until one erupts close to him. The screen goes blurry and most of the noise is muffled accompanied with the sound of ringing ears. Adam is lying on the ground trying to regain his senses and crawl away. He is bloody. Finally the loudest explosion is heard and the screen goes white. Only ringing is heard. The doctor shakes his head. The operation is a failure and they leave the stage. We see the Priest smiling broadly at the failure as if he had predicted the outcome.

Lights fade out and Adam is heard screaming as he wakes up.

Scene TEN

Lights go up. Adam is being wheeled onto the space in a wheelchair. He looks tired and unresponsive. Around him are two other tables with 10 performers occupying the space (some are seated while others are just drifting around). All the performers are dressed in white hospital robes or uniforms. A new set of bandages has been wrapped around his chest.

The nurse pushes Adam to one of the tables with a skinny and sickly man situated at the other end. He sits staring at Adam, almost looking through him. The man's eyes are baggy due to little sleep and he looks pale and sickly. He smiles at Adam. In front of them, and on all the other tables, are two keyboards. The projector is displaying a black screen with a flashing cursor. Adam feels uncomfortable and annoyed with the man staring at him. He tries to

wheel himself away but the individual starts to laugh hysterically bringing Adam to a dead halt with a fearful expression on his face.

Two nurses enter seating a few of the patients down and giving them pills to drink. The patients are very unresponsive and some of them need to be fed the pills and water. Their treatment of the patients is unkind and slightly violent.

The smiling man slowly pulls his keyboard closer and starts to type with one finger, "Watching you". The text shows on the projector. Adam reads it but decides to ignore the man. The man types the same words once again to which Adam responds:

Adam: I can see that. Quit it.

Patient: They're watching you.

Adam is confused and looks around the room and back at the man.

Adam: Who?

PATIENT: Them.

Adam: Them?

PATIENT: The ones who watch..

Adam: From where?

PATIENT: Everywhere.

Adam: Yes, but tell me...

PATIENT: . . .Every movement. Every decision. Every thought. Everywhere. ALWAYS.

Adam: I don't see them.

PATIENT: They see for you. . .They see YOU.

The side screens and projector screen start displaying live footage of Adam. He is being filmed from above. He looks for the cameras and wheels himself back. His gaze shoots from corner to corner and then back down to the man again. The smiling patient starts to laugh hysterically; more so than before. Two nurses enter from behind the man and push him out in his wheelchair.

Adam wants to leave but he is too weak to get up. He looks around the room and wants to wheel himself away but the Priest enters and Adam stops. The priest pulls a chair closer to the table and seats himself opposite Adam. He is carrying a small box which he places on his lap. He places his hands on the table with his palms facing up

as gesturing that he comes in peace. Adam digs into one of his pockets pulls out the card given to him by the priest and flings it across the table. He starts wheeling himself away.

The priest loudly places the box on the table. Adam stops and turns his head just in time to see the priest opening it to reveal its contents to Adam.

Adam reluctantly wheels himself back. He peers into the box. The Priest gestures for Adam to go ahead and examine it. Adam proceeds and pulls out strange device from the box. The Priest points towards Adam's faulty heart and then at the device and reveals it to be a Genesis ULTIMA Limb replacement for the clockwork heart

Adam stares in awe and we see the joy boiling up inside of him. He handles it like precious glass and puts his hand over his faulty heart. Adam's expression changes as he looks at the priest. He is conflicted. He is reluctant to trust the man. The priest takes Adam's hand, blesses him with the drawing of the 'ON' symbol takes the device, places it back in the box and turns to leave. He stops and places the card in front of Adam before exiting. Adam stares down at the card placing his hand on his chest once more as the sadness and anger simmer inside of him.

Lights off.

Scene TWELVE

Tribal electronic music starts playing (Note: Stratonika's Mortal Kombat X themes for Quan Chi, Raiden, Scorpion or Sub-Zero could work. Visit the Stratonika YouTube Channel for the songs). Strobe lights flashing to the music reveal the performers scattered in the space as they dance to the music. Two performers are seated in the lotus position on the meditation blocks with headphones covering their ears. The dancers are completely immersed in the music, each dancing on their own while the lights capture frozen movements. The atmosphere being created is much like the Zion dance scene in the Matix Reloaded by the Wachowski twins.

Lights go up on the cathedral interior.

The priest is standing behind the booth located at the top of the stairs. On the podium in front of him is a glass box containing the same button used in the first scene. He is looking down at a gathering of people. Whilst dancing they turn to face him and he raises his hands toward them. A large banner displaying cyborg man with an 'ON' symbol halo is lowered down behind the priest and in front of the screen. In his left hand the cyborg wields fire and in

the right he wields a globe. The crowd comes to a standstill and lifts its hands up towards the banner.

Priest points towards Adam at the end of the room. The crowd slowly forms a hall through which Adam cautiously passes towards the Priest. He looks at them but they do not register him. The priest draws the 'ON' symbol blessing in the air which they mechanically mimic. The priest moves down towards Adam and meets him at the end. He is carrying the box containing the heart.

He places his hand on the young man's shoulder and then blesses Adam with the same sign which the devotees mimic again. As he opens it the performers kneel down on one knee. Adam seems confused and uneasy. The priest offers Adam the heart which Adam then takes out of the box. As he holds it in his hands a spotlight lights up on the altar with the team of surgeons waiting for him.

Adam looks at his new heart and feels the clockwork heart in his chest. He wants it but looks down at mechanical devotees and then up to the banner. Adam shakes his head knowing that he might regret his next decision later. He places the heart back in the box and backs away from the priest.

As he does so the devotees raise themselves to their feet. Adam realises he is trapped. The Priest makes a final offer to Adam which he turns down a second time. The Priest gestures to his devotees to deal with Adam and returns to the top of the stairs. They form a circle around him which grows smaller and smaller as they try to overpower him. Adam struggles to break free as they latch onto him. After much struggle he manages to tear himself loose and bursts through the crowd, running towards the priest. His run is cut short when his heart starts to give in and we hear the ticking slowing down.

Adam stumbles and falls as the devotees make their way towards him. The Priest meets Adam who is now crawling to the steps. He bends down takes the heart out of the box and holds it in front of Adam's face. The devotees are about to grab onto him, when Adam pulls the Priest down and pulls the remote from his pocket (the same one he used on Adam's father). Adam points it at the crowd and pushes the button. They freeze.

Lying next to the Priest sees the red button which the Priest guarded - the button from scene one. He slowly makes his way to it, half stumbling half crawling, leaving the Priest to stare in shock at his frozen congregation and then at Adam. Adam stands looking down at the crowd and then down at his heart. The Priest laughs at him as he grows weaker. The projector screen shows Mother Nature sitting under the tree next to him. The on-screen Adam plucks an

apple cuts it and hands her the one half. They sit and give Adam a reassuring smile.

On stage Adam turns around walks towards the button with the Priest running to stop the young man before he can press. He is too late and Adam slams down on it. All the lights go out except for a spotlight in the middle of the room.

Adam starts walking towards it as the devotees form two rows across the room and turn to face the audience; dim lights go up on them as Filmed footage of the audience is played showing them typing and speaking on their phones. This footage is combined with footage taken from restaurants, streets, universities and the internet showing people of all ages fixated on their phones, even babies.

Adam is lying down in the middle of the room. He stares up at the ceiling. As his heart slows down to a dangerously slow pace the performers collapse and all the lights and screens go out. He smiles whilst listening to the tick of his heart. Adam closes his eyes and places his hands on his clockwork heart.

It stops.

The light fades out.